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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE national accounts published this week fully confirm the gloomiest anticipations. At the end of December expenditure for the current financial year exceeded revenue by nearly £170 millions, as compared with £138 millions at the same time a year ago. It is only, of course, the difference between these two figures that is significant, for the last quarter of the financial year is always the biggest revenue-yielder, and can be relied upon to overtake a deficit at this stage of £140 millions. But the difference of £32 millions between this year and last is unquestionably significant. Revenue is down as compared with last year by £16½ millions, and expenditure up by £15½ millions. The falling-off of revenue is entirely a matter of the last quarter. During the first six months, indeed, the revenue receipts showed an appreciable increase over the previous year; but in the last quarter they are down by nearly £22 millions. This decline reflects, of course, in large measure the consequences of the Stock Exchange slump; but this explanation is in no way reassuring, for the same cause will prejudice the revenue receipts for the quarter which has still to come, and also the estimates which it will be reasonable to form of the yield of revenue in the ensuing year. On the expenditure side, moreover, most of the increases for which the legislation of the present Parliament is responsible will only begin to make themselves felt in the quarter that has now opened. Altogether the effect of the figures published is to suggest that the deficit on the current year will be even larger than we had predicted.

A large deficit and a swingeing increase of taxation in the next Budget are indeed so clearly inevitable that Mr. Churchill and Mr. Snowden have already begun what is likely to prove a long-sustained controversy as to where the main responsibility lies. As Mr. Snowden cannot deny that he has sanctioned, however reluctantly, substantial increases of expenditure, and as Mr. Churchill cannot pretend that this is the whole story, each of these protagonists is on much stronger ground when he attacks the other than when he defends himself. Their interchanges are likely, accordingly, to be extremely entertaining from a Parliamentary standpoint, if not very reassuring to the public, and this expectation was certainly confirmed by the debate on Christmas Eve. One incident of this debate is worth notice. Mr. Churchill is apparently so jealous of the laurels which Mr. Snowden acquired at The Hague, that he sought to criticize him for not having been sufficiently firm. He argued that Mr. Snowden should have given notice that, as we did not succeed in getting the full 100 per cent. of what we demanded as our due in accordance with the terms of the Balfour Note, we would no longer be bound by its self-denying provisions. And this, if you please, should have been done, so that we might get the full advantage of any payments which Soviet Russia may make in respect of her war debts! Mr. Churchill has, we are aware, thrown out this remarkable criticism before in a public speech. That he should repeat it in all seriousness in the House of Commons, after rebuking Mr. Snowden, in April, quite properly as we thought, for suggesting that the Balfour Note could be repudiated, reveals in a startling manner the element of real silliness which is mixed up,

we are afraid, with Mr. Churchill's many distinguished qualities.

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The French Government have defined their views on the issues before the Naval Conference in a Memorandum which leaves no possible doubt as to the magnitude of the gulf that must be bridged before any agreement can be arrived at. On the technical aspects of naval limitation, the Memorandum simply repeats the French preference for limitation by global tonnage, modified only by provision for publicity as to the amount of construction contemplated in each category. This thesis, which will have the support of Italy, runs directly counter to the insistence of the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, on limitation by categories, and it is clear that no agreement is possible without large concessions on one or both sides, or exceptional ingenuity in finding a formula of compromise. With regard to the standard of strength required by France, no definite figures are quoted, but arguments are put forward which have the appearance of paving the way for a demonstration that the French fleet requires to be strengthened, both absolutely and relatively, in order to provide for defence of the country's vital interests. The Memorandum adds that, owing to the interdependence of sea, land, and air armaments, the particulars to be furnished would "become utterly valueless," if the decisions of the Preparatory Commission at their last meeting should again be questioned—that is, if the question of trained reservists should be reopened.

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More serious, however, than any technical differences, or tonnage claims, is the French Government's attitude towards the functions and possibilities of the Conference itself. Stripped of all diplomatic phrases, and of its polite satire at the expense of Anglo-American parity, the contention of the Memorandum is that, while the Kellogg Pact is "a real step towards the preservation of peace," the absence of sanctions deprives it of any great, immediate significance. Reduction of armaments can be made possible only by material guarantees of security, and must therefore be related to the Covenant rather than to the Pact; a complete naval agreement implies definition of belligerent and neutral rights, and a pledge of armed co-operation against any possible aggressor. For these reasons, as well as by reason of the interdependence of all forms of armament, the French Government can regard the Conference only as a discussion preliminary to the work of the Preparatory Commission, on which, in turn, a general Disarmament Conference may ultimately base its investigations. Nevertheless, they are willing to seek such solutions of the naval problem as will "allow any Powers desirous of doing so and being of opinion that they could do so without danger to enter into a binding agreement as between themselves."

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On the theory that disarmament can only proceed *pari passu* with the provisions of clearly defined, concrete, material safeguards, the French attitude is strictly logical. Whether that is the real road to peace is another question. It is clear, at any rate, that it is a road along which the United States is not prepared to journey. It remains to be seen whether the American delegates will be empowered to discuss, even informally, an agreement for conference and consultation, on the lines suggested by Mr. Hughes, and whether such an agreement would be accepted by France as any substantial concession to her demands. Meanwhile, the Memorandum makes the definite suggestion of a pact of mutual guarantee and non-aggression between the

Mediterranean Naval Powers (France, Italy, Great Britain, and others not represented at the Conference) as a measure which might satisfy, to some extent, the French demand for security, and so reduce France's naval requirements.

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Italian comment on the Memorandum is very reserved, but suggests that Italy sees no necessity of rivalry between the Pact and the Covenant, and believes in the possibility of reconciling the Continental with the Anglo-American approach to disarmament. Italy is clearly ready to dispute the French claim to express the views of all States not represented at the Conference. In Japan, the Memorandum is regarded as increasing the difficulty of agreement, and it has naturally had a bad Press in the United States. The stress laid on material guarantees, the insistence on Geneva as the final authority, and the depreciation of the Pact in comparison with the Covenant, all run strongly counter to American opinion. The Administration, however, remains officially optimistic, and is hopeful, apparently, of a Three-Power or Four-Power Agreement, even if France refuses to commit herself. The difficulty, of course, is that the British Admiralty would be very unwilling to accept a definite limit (and reduction) of cruiser and destroyer strength if the French strength in cruisers and submarines remained unlimited. In default of a satisfactory all-round solution, the best hope seems to lie in some informal or interim agreement with France which would enable the other parties to the Conference to conclude an agreement among themselves, subject to revision in the event of a breakdown at Geneva. There are signs in the Memorandum that, on these lines, the French attitude may prove less rigid in practice than in theory.

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The New Year in India opens badly. The Viceroy's conference with Mr. Gandhi and his friends was wholly unproductive. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru opened the All-India Congress with a vitriolic attack on the British Empire, whose "chief means of subsistence" was "exploitation" of other races, and declared that "complete independence" must be substituted for Dominion status as the immediate goal. Eventually the Congress carried, by an immense majority, Mr. Gandhi's resolution in favour of complete independence, a boycott of Central and Provincial Legislatures and of the round-table conference, and instructing the Congress Committee to launch, at its own discretion, a programme of civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, "under such safeguards as it may consider necessary." The meaning of this last phrase is not clear. Some light may be thrown on it by the fact that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, while he stated that it was not necessary to resort to "methods of violence" (that is to say cold-blooded murder) in order to rid Indians of their "slavery," went out of his way to justify them, and to suggest that they might ultimately be adopted. A resolution deploring the recent bomb outrage, and congratulating Lord and Lady Irwin on their escape, was only carried, after acrimonious discussion, by 897 votes to 816.

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As a counter-blast to the proceedings of the Congress, the National Liberal Federation of India have passed resolutions accepting Dominion status as a full satisfaction of India's demands, and declaring for participation in the proposed conference. The speeches made by leading Liberals were notable for the warm appreciation shown of the Viceroy's announcement on Dominion status, and of the attitude of the Indian Princes. There is a good deal of evidence that the



violence of the proceedings at Lahore has disgusted many of those who have hitherto supported the Congress movement, and in the Madras Presidency, in particular, wholesale secessions are threatened. On personal grounds, the demand made on all Congress members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures to resign their seats, is proving very unpopular. There can be no doubt, however, that the proceedings at Lahore have greatly increased the difficulty of the situation. They have destroyed the last hope of winning Mr. Gandhi and his followers to co-operation; they have intensified the uneasiness of the Moslems; and the thinly veiled incitements to violence in the speeches of Congress leaders are likely to meet with a response which will create a most unfavourable atmosphere for the delicate negotiations about to be set on foot. We discuss the question more fully elsewhere.

M. Tardieu's Government has gained a notable victory. On December 27th, M. Franklin-Bouillon attacked the Government's foreign policy in the Chamber, and early in the discussion, M. Reibel read out a memorandum prepared by Marshal Foch three years ago, in which he stated that the German danger was as formidable as ever; that the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles had not been carried out; and that it would be a most serious mistake to evacuate the Rhineland before the end of the prescribed period of fifteen years. Strengthened by this sensational revelation, the Government's critics attempted to extract an undertaking from M. Briand and the Premier that no promises of further evacuation would be made at The Hague. M. Tardieu, in reply, stated that the Government "did not attach great military importance to the evacuation of the Third Zone"; but added that its evacuation would have the greatest moral significance, and would only be carried out when a final agreement with Germany had been reached. Although the attack, supported by such methods, was nicely calculated to appeal to those sections of the Right by which M. Tardieu is supported, only seventeen votes were registered in support of the resolution of no-confidence. The Chamber evidently does not intend to tie M. Tardieu's hands too tightly at The Hague. How he will construe and use his liberty remains to be seen.

The Chinese Government have issued an order which the majority of Chinese will regard as abolishing all extra-territorial privileges enjoyed by foreigners in China. Its text, which has been most carefully drafted, implies that the Chinese Authorities desire to speak emphatically and to act cautiously. The order states that from January 1st, 1930, all foreigners in China shall abide by the laws, ordinances, and regulations promulgated by the Central and local Governments. It does not abolish Consular jurisdiction; it merely enjoins Consular Courts to enforce and interpret Chinese ordinances, and the final sentence directs the Ministries concerned to draw up, "for examination and deliberation," a plan for execution of the edict. This does not in itself suggest that any decisive step will be taken in the immediate future, and the whole edict must be read in the light of an *aide-mémoire*, dated December 24th, 1929, presented by the British Foreign Office, and the Chinese Government's reply thereto.

In this *aide-mémoire*, the British Government reminded Nanking of the "intricate readjustments" that must be made during "a gradual and progressive solution of the problem of extra-territoriality," and agreed that January 1st, 1930, should be regarded as the date from which the gradual abolition of extra-territorial

rights should begin. They added that they were ready to enter into detailed negotiations, as soon as political conditions in China should render it possible to do so. In reply, the Chinese Government expressed their appreciation of the "liberal and sympathetic spirit" shown by Great Britain, and their conviction that a declaration to the effect that "the process of the abolition of extra-territoriality should be regarded as having commenced in principle on January 1st, 1930," would not "be objectionable to the British Government."

Sir Charles Trevelyan's promised Bill to raise the school age was read for the first time before Parliament rose. It is a short Bill in two clauses extending the provisions of the 1921 Act to compel children to attend school up to the age of fifteen. The maintenance grants are not specified in the Bill itself, as it is intended that these provisions should be made by Board of Education regulations under Section 118 of Mr. Fisher's Act. Referring to the method of awarding the new allowances to selected children, Sir Charles Trevelyan stated, in answer to a question put by Mr. Percy Harris, that the Government would be largely guided by the expression of opinion received from representative bodies and from local authorities, and that he proposes to ask the local educational authorities to assist him by forming a committee to recommend scales of need and a simple procedure for determining eligibility. The Exchequer contribution, it has been decided, is to be 60 per cent. on all allowances not exceeding 5s. per week. The total cost of the allowances is estimated at £3 millions for the first full year, rising to £4.4 millions in 1935-36. These are moderate figures; and the figure of 5s. indicates that only a modest scale of allowances is contemplated, on the basis, moreover, of a "means test." This moderation is certain to cause a further fierce controversy within the Labour Party, if and when we get to the Bill. We say "if," for the Minister added that he had only introduced it at the present time for the guidance of local authorities; and that no date was at present suggested for the Second Reading, although the Government was determined to pass it before Christmas, 1930.

The New Year's Honours are disappointing for those who have been expecting a spectacular flood of Labour Peers to redress the balance of debating strength in the Upper House. Only two of the six new Peers are active politicians: Mr. Arthur Ponsonby and Major Aman. Mr. Ponsonby is, of course, eminently fitted in every way for the House of Lords, and the only reason for surprise at his elevation is that he was thought to be unwilling to accept it. The reshuffle of offices which followed the discovery that there were more Under-Secretaries in the House of Commons than the law allows would have been unnecessary if Mr. Ponsonby had been made a Baron a few weeks earlier. Major Aman has been a Labour Candidate since 1924, and is reputed to be strong in debate. We are glad to see that, among the other new Peers, Mr. MacDonald has included that excellent Liberal and worker for peace, Sir Willoughby Dickinson, and that public-spirited shipowner, Sir William Noble; while no one will dispute that Sir Charles Wakefield and Sir Hugh Trenchard, the retiring Chief of the Air Staff, have been appropriately honoured. Among the other honours, we note with particular pleasure the Knighthood bestowed on that artist-craftsman Mr. Emery Walker, and the Companionship of Honour for Miss Maude Royden.

## LAHORE AND AFTER

THE news from India during the past week has been important, and at first sight gravely disquieting. A majority of the Indian National Congress assembled at Lahore has substituted complete independence for Dominion status as the avowed goal of its policy, declared a boycott of the Legislative Councils, declined participation in the round-table conference promised a few weeks ago by the British Government, and given authority to its executive to inaugurate at their discretion a campaign of civil disobedience, including the non-payment of taxes. We shall offer reasons in a moment for holding that the situation which has thus developed contains elements of hope and promise as well as of danger. But it is at least sufficiently definite to make it imperative for political persons and parties in this country to brace themselves anew to face the problem of India in 1930 with realism and resolution, and without mutual recrimination. There will be some who hold that had the Viceroy's pronouncement not been subjected to criticism in Parliament it might have reaped its full fruits in the adhesion of the Congress leaders to the plan of a round-table conference. There will be others to maintain that this pronouncement itself, by raising false hopes and expectations, was among the causes that precipitated the Congress into its act of perilous madness. Such questions are irrelevant to the future. Two things are plain. First, Parliament is committed to seeking guidance, with an open mind and in good faith, from the proceedings of the round-table conference as well as from the report of its own Commissioners in framing a scheme for the further advance of India towards self-government. Secondly, in the meanwhile, it is responsible, as it always has been, for giving every support to the Viceroy and his Council in the measures necessary to preserve order and civilized government in India.

The question of most immediate interest is whether the Congress leaders will desire to use the weapon placed in their hands and what kind of response they will meet with if they attempt to do so. It may or may not turn out to be significant that in the Subjects Committee of the Congress the fatal resolution was only passed after a violent discussion and by a majority of votes. What is clear on the face of it is that the extremist party consists of very discordant elements, with very different ultimate aims and very different philosophies of action. The bonds of parental and filial affection in the Nehru family may suffice to prevent disruption between the older Hindu nationalism, encrusted in its age-long shell of caste and family and tradition and property and creed, and the headstrong young idealist-materialists of the League of Youth. But can either older or younger Nehru feel confident that Mahatma Gandhi is a good man with whom to go hunting tigers in the jungles of civil disobedience? That veteran saint (whose motives it is doubtless impious to analyze, but whose activities it may none the less be a duty to resist) has apparently once more convinced himself, in spite of bitter experience to the contrary in the past, that non-co-operation and non-violence are compatible terms. Can the hot-heads be sure that there will not

be another orgy of penitence and self-disgust on his part when the blood begins to flow?

We do not wish to lay too much stress on these internal divisions. History does not disprove that revolutionaries of utterly different temperaments and views can preserve a sufficient unity of front, provided their immediate objectives are purely negative and destructive, as those of the Congress leaders, after a year's half-hearted flirtation with honest work and thought, have now once more become. If Gandhi throws down the torch as soon as he feels the scorch of it on his soul, it may not make much difference; others may pick it up. The old men who want to preserve and the young men who want to disrupt the Hindu social system may forget their differences awhile in the delights of political murder. Of two things we feel certain. The first is that whatever may have been true of other countries and other times, the weapon of violence can at this stage of their history lead the peoples of India nowhere at all, except to disaster and destruction. In particular we are convinced that the Irish analogy, which has apparently become a favourite theme with the Indian extremists of recent months, is a radically false one. It is not only that there is no Indian nation as there has always been an Irish nation—that India contains a thousand Ulsters, not comfortably tucked away in a north-east corner, but diffused in a network of inextricable complication throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is that among the majority creeds and races themselves there is no uniformity of will to make revolution a success—no such combination of innate political capacity with burning resentment against the foreigner as could invest a parallel Government, like that set up by Sinn Féin, with effective authority or enable it to carry its task to completion.

The second point is this. The British people, stirred by the news from Lahore from immersion in their domestic politics and their Christmas festivities, may be tempted to regard the Congress resolution as more of a bolt from the blue than it actually is. But there is no reason to suppose that the Government of India has at any moment forgotten that the threat of civil disobedience in 1930 was launched many months ago, or has failed to lay its plans accordingly. We cannot doubt that the Viceroy is genuinely and bitterly disappointed at the failure, so far as the Congress party is concerned, of his long and patient endeavour to forge the bonds of friendship and co-operation between Indian patriots and British people. But there is no reason to conclude that because his policy has been generous and conciliatory, his administration will be timid or feeble. Should the extremists decide to launch the crazy missile with which their fingers are fiddling, the Government of India will not be caught unprepared, and in its measures of resistance will have the support not only of the British Parliament, but of the vast majority of responsible Indian opinion.

And this brings us to the most hopeful feature of the present situation. For reasons which there is no object now in discussing, large numbers of able and disinterested Indian reformers found themselves unable to co-operate in the work of the Simon Commission. It was natural that the strength of their feelings on this



matter should lead to an apparent narrowing of the gap between their position and that of the Congress leaders. The Viceroy's declaration and the Congress's anti-declaration have cleared the air and sharpened the issues. There can no longer be any doubt where the Indian Moderate Party stands. The meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Madras has not been slow to take up the challenge of Congress, to declare its cordial welcome of the Viceroy's pronouncement, and to set on foot preparations for effective participation in the promised round-table conference. Among the speeches delivered at Madras none was more notable and none more welcome than that of Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, a representative of all that is best in Indian national aspirations—Gandhi's equal in unchallengeable purity of motive and immeasurably his superior in practical wisdom. That the Congress leaders will not be at the Conference is in itself a thing to be regretted, since nobody in his senses would deny that they represent a vocal and influential though not a predominant section of opinion. That the manner of their abstention, coupled as it is with a toying with the forces of disorder and rebellion, should have brought home anew to the Indian Moderates the urgent need of preparing a constructive and comprehensive statement of their views on the future of Indian government, is all to the good. They need have no fear that such a statement will not be listened to with attention and respect by the British people.

Meanwhile, a foretaste of the difficulties and problems with which the Conference will be faced has been given by the publication of the report of the Committee of the Central Indian Legislature, which has been sitting in joint deliberation with the Simon Commission. The mass of supplements and reservations appended to this report is itself an index of the diversity of views which may be expected to arise at the Conference, representing as it will a far wider and more heterogeneous body of opinion than that relatively compact committee. The committee are, nevertheless, to be congratulated on the thought and energy which they have put into a somewhat thankless task, discharged with courage and public spirit in the face of criticism and abuse. It would not be wise for the British public to attempt to form a definite judgment either on the Committee's agreed recommendations or on the matters over which there is dispute until it is in possession not only of the Simon Report, but of such other evidence as may be forthcoming from India now that the feet of the majority are once more set firmly in the paths of co-operation. But it is not too soon, we think, to call attention to two matters which seem likely to become crucial, and which the public may profitably begin to turn over in its mind. First, supposing the next stage in the evolution of Indian self-government to be the establishment of responsible Cabinet Government in the provinces, what is to be done about the administration of law and order? Should it, in some provinces or in all, be made an exception and removed altogether from the sphere of Ministerial responsibility to the Legislature? Or, if not, should some minimum standard of expenditure and efficiency be prescribed, below which the Legislature should be incompetent to enforce reduction? And

secondly, on the same supposition, what is likely to be the reaction on the structure of the Central Government? Will its functions be subject to a natural atrophy save in those essential matters of defence and foreign relations which must remain for the present in autocratic hands? Or will the growing economic unification of the country continue to furnish it with a mass of business—business, for example, concerned with railways, with tariffs, with labour codes—which *must* be conducted centrally, but *might* be conducted democratically? And if the latter, is there any alternative to the introduction into the Central Government of that much-abused principle of dyarchy which has played its part, perhaps after all without entire discredit, in the transitional period in the provinces?

The sooner the Simon Commission can inform us of its judgment on these and many other grave matters, the better. Meanwhile, whether the Congress leaders discharge their pistol or whether it disappears quietly up their sleeves amid a covering thunder of tumultuous cheers, the Government of India must be carried on. The Viceroy should be assured of full support from home in any measures which he may consider necessary, whether to repress actual disorder or to anticipate its outbreak.

## THE MCKENNA DUTIES

ON Monday of Christmas week Mr. Snowden made a statement designed to relieve the uncertainty of traders and manufacturers as to the position in which they might find themselves if he should decide to repeal the McKenna duties or certain other indirect taxes in the next Budget. The assurances contained in the statement were not extensive. They were limited to an undertaking that, if the silk and sugar duties were repealed, some scheme of rebates on duty-paid stocks would be introduced, and that, if the McKenna duties were repealed, there would be, as in 1924, the usual drawback on exports. On the question of whether any of these duties were likely to be repealed, Mr. Snowden refused to throw any light whatever, taking his stand on "the invariable rule that Budget decisions cannot be anticipated." He even appeared doubtful whether it was really quite proper to give the foregoing assurances; for he was at pains to emphasize that "it is only in consideration of the exceptional circumstances of the present time and of their bearing on the pressing problem of employment that I have agreed to make this statement," and that it must not be assumed that "the same course would be followed in different circumstances or in future years."

For our part, we entertain only a limited veneration for such rules and traditions as that by which Mr. Snowden professes to be bound. They are useful servants, but bad masters. If Mr. Snowden seriously thinks that the repeal or the reduction of the McKenna duties or the silk duties or the sugar duties is a possible feature of his coming Budget, he is perfectly right not to commit himself in any way. But, if it is already clear to him that he must put such thoughts aside for the time being, he might well say so, as it seems to us, without any sort of disadvantage, immediate or ultimate, belonging to the domain of reality, and with considerable advantage, as indeed he recognizes, to business confidence and to employment in the meantime.

The propriety of making such a statement is, however, a very secondary matter. The question of real importance

is whether it would be wise or defensible policy to repeal or reduce any of these duties in the coming Budget. In our judgment it would be the height of folly, and utterly indefensible to touch a single one of them. We think it desirable to state our opinion plainly and emphatically; since it might be most unfortunate if the impression were to get abroad that Free Trade opinion would be solidly behind a course which, under present economic conditions, must do wanton mischief to trade and employment, and would, incidentally, we believe, do irreparable damage to the Free Trade cause.

In the first place, Mr. Snowden, in his coming Budget, will be in no position to throw away any part of his existing revenue. In recent articles we have attempted to call attention to the gravity of the financial outlook, and the revenue returns which have just been published make it clear, as we thought probable at the time, that our analysis erred on the side of understatement. Formidable increases in direct taxation, such as another shilling on the income tax, or some variant of the surtax proposal which will have much the same significance and psychological effect, are already inevitable; and the man who supposes that such taxation will not react prejudicially on business activity and economic welfare is—a rude word is the most appropriate—an ass. The situation is indeed so difficult that on merits there is much to be said for not leaning entirely on direct taxation, but for increasing indirect taxes as well in order to make ends meet. This would, of course, be so distasteful to Mr. Snowden and the Labour Party that it is not very likely to be done. But for Mr. Snowden to go out of his way to enlarge the gap which he will have to meet by repealing or reducing existing indirect taxes which bring in a modest but useful revenue would, in all the circumstances, be a most irresponsible proceeding. It could only be justified, if it could be shown that the taxes which it was proposed to repeal were not merely obnoxious on grounds of general principle, but were doing serious practical mischief, mischief exceeding any which might be caused by a still further increase of the income tax. With regard to none of the duties referred to by Mr. Snowden, not even with regard to the McKenna duties which represent the heart of the controversy, can such a contention possibly be sustained.

On the contrary, even if we had not to face a condition of exceptional financial stringency, it would be very difficult, on industrial grounds, to justify the choice of the present year for the repeal of the McKenna duties. We have to reckon this year with the repercussions of the Wall Street slump as the dominating factor in the world economic situation. Many of those repercussions should prove very helpful to us, notably cheap money throughout the world. But one repercussion which it is idle to ignore is that many of our industries will have to face keener American competition in our domestic and in export markets. In no industry is this factor likely to be more important than in the production of motor-cars. For the automobile industry stands out pre-eminent among the "luxury" industries of the United States, which are already finding it difficult to sell their products at home owing to the sense of impoverishment resulting from the collapse of stock values.

This constitutes an extraordinarily unfavourable environment for withdrawing the protection which the British motor-car industry has hitherto enjoyed. The removal of protective duties, on which an industry has been built up, is, of course, always liable to cause immediate dislocation; so that the present year, with unemployment very high and showing ominous signs, when all seasonal influences have been allowed for, of moving up-

wards, with the assurance of business confidence perhaps our most pressing economic need, would in any case be a bad time for repealing the McKenna duties. But the force of this consideration is increased tenfold, so far as the motor industry is concerned, when we remember that we may have to face something fairly deserving the name of dumping from the United States. The repeal of the McKenna duties, under those conditions, would undoubtedly entail a large addition to the numbers of the unemployed; and it is idle to suppose that there would be compensation in other directions on anything approaching a commensurate scale.

In our judgment, either this industrial argument or the previous financial argument would, by itself, be sufficient to forbid the repeal just now of the McKenna duties. Together they form a case of overwhelming strength, so overwhelming, indeed, that the possibility of repeal could safely be ruled out, if it were not for the high authority which Mr. Snowden is believed to attach to the claims of Free Trade principle.

Now, it is surely to misconceive altogether the place of principle in economic affairs to suppose that you ought to do things in deference to it which are likely to be mischievous in their results. It is absurd to claim for economic principles the dignity of categorical imperatives. Their whole purpose is, or should be, to indicate generally what you should do in order to obtain good results; and it is the sheerest pedantry to suppose that it is in some way virtuous to follow them when you recognize that they will produce bad results. There is, indeed, one principle, above all others, which is at present unduly neglected in our economic statesmanship, namely, the principle that policy should be related to circumstances. It would be at least as ill-judged to repeal the McKenna duties in 1930 in deference to Free Trade principles, as it was to restore the gold standard in 1925 in deference to sound money principles.

It is not as though it were in the least likely that the repeal of the McKenna duties by Mr. Snowden would serve to fortify Free Trade, and scotch the possibility that Protection may gradually spread itself throughout our fiscal system. On the contrary, it would inevitably stimulate Protectionist agitation, and, if the immediate effects of repeal proved as patently injurious as we believe they would, it might lead, by way of reaction, to the establishment of a considerably more extended tariff system than we possess at present.

This leads us to our final point. In approaching tariff questions to-day, it is vital that we should consider the bearing of our actions on the project of the World Economic Conference, the endeavour, by international agreement, to reverse the tendency towards rising tariffs throughout the world. Would the repeal of the McKenna duties help or hinder that endeavour? We are convinced, for our part, that it would hinder it; and we believe that our opinion is shared by those who are closely in touch with the actual work of Geneva. We cannot attempt now to elaborate our reasons for taking this view; we must be content with a summary indication of their nature. If we are to pursue the method of international agreement, it will be important that British Governments should be able to give undertakings relating to tariffs which succeeding Governments will not repudiate. If anything comes of Mr. Graham's proposal for a tariff truce, it will involve such an undertaking; he is proposing in effect to tie the hands of succeeding Governments. But if we are to proceed upon these lines, we must cultivate some degree of continuity of policy in regard to tariffs; and we must modify our national tradition of treating them as the favourite Aunt Sally of our domestic politics.



## HARBIN

(NOVEMBER 23RD, 1929, IN THE TRAIN BETWEEN CHANGCHUN AND DAIREN.)

WHEN we stepped out of the Japanese train and saw "Changchun" written up in Russian letters over the platform and the Russian train waiting to receive us on the Russian gauge, there came over me a strange dreamlike feeling that I had done this once before. How could that be, considering that I was visiting Manchuria for the first time in my life? What was the nearest point to Manchuria that I had reached on other journeys? I suppose somewhere in Latvia, a year and a half ago, when I was travelling from Vilna to Riga; and that was far indeed from Manchuria, for the whole length of Russia lay between. Yet that was it—that was the memory that was forcing its way up to the surface of my mind—and suddenly the picture became clear: the high Russian railway-carriages, each with its own stove-chimney; the frozen crust of snow; the cutting wind; the flocs of ice drifting and spinning down the great river in the great plain. That river was the Dvina, this is the Sungari; this is the ice of autumn, that was the ice of spring. But the atmosphere is the same—an atmosphere of fear and expectancy, radiating from the fringe of the vast veiled world of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

On both landscapes, fear has set its mark. The banks of the Dvina were pitted with the trenches and shell-holes of the Great War. Ten years after the fighting had ceased on the Eastern Front, these military works were still the chief monuments of human activity in that desolate land. Manchuria is not desolate; the soil has yielded to the plough of the Chinese settler from Shantung, and even the casual passer-by can foresee that, at no distant date, this may become one of the most populous and prosperous agricultural countries in the world—if only the folly and wickedness of Governments do not undo the husbandman's work. Meanwhile, fear has set its mark on this country also, in the loop-holed breastworks of the railway stations and in the loop-holed towers at the four corners of the walled enclosures surrounding the farms and the soya-bean depots by the side of the line. Another, fresher memory thrust itself up, and I recalled that wired, trenched, and sandbagged railway-station in Northern Syria where I had woken up, a few weeks ago *en route* from Angora to Aleppo in the course of my journey out to the Far East. In Nature, the human eye singles out the marks that human action has impressed upon her. No landscape could well differ more sharply from these flat, frozen, fertile Manchurian fields than those rolling, rocky Syrian ridges under a summer sun that could scorch within an hour of rising. Yet that common touch of fear gives the same feeling to the two landscapes. In both Syria and Manchuria, the bandit is still exercising dominion; and, call him "Cheteh" or call him "Hung-huz," the marks of his presence are the same.

As for the sense of expectancy, the Soviet Union seems to have some uncanny power of arousing it, from whatever quarter one may happen to approach the Soviet frontiers. I remembered now how, after our Latvian train had carried us from the Polish frontier to the northern bank of the Dvina, we nursed a wild hope that it might turn its head east instead of west and convey us not to Riga but to Moscow. What was the use of being in a Russian train on the Russian gauge if one was to be kept within the bounds of a "border-State," and not to roll on into Russia itself? When we arrived at the junction with the Moscow-Riga line and found ourselves being hooked on to an incoming train from Moscow, we felt a sharp pang of dis-

appointment. Just look at that through-carriage, at the rear of the train, that has come all the way from Manchouli—the frontier-station where the Trans-Siberian Railway links up with the Chinese Eastern Railway at the Far Eastern extremity of the Soviet Union. At that instant, I vowed a vow that one day I would travel in a Russian train through Manchuria, and here and now that vow is being fulfilled. But it is not being fulfilled in the way that I had expected. I had imagined myself arriving at Changchun from Riga or Stolpe after travelling on the Russian gauge across the whole length of Siberia. Instead, I find myself once more in a "border-State," barred out from access to the Soviet Union by a frontier which I cannot pass; and I have merely travelled from Changchun to Harbin. But I must not grumble, for at any rate I have seen Harbin.

What is Harbin? It is not easy to convey an impression of it, because Harbin is so many things in one. First and foremost it is a railway town—the junction of the two arms of the Chinese Eastern Railway, at the point where the main line crosses the navigable Sungari River. Besides that, Harbin is a kind of half-fossilized relic of the old Imperial Russia, and at the same time it is a pioneer town such as you might find in the prairie provinces of Canada, or in Alaska. Here are "White" Russian emigrants still fighting their tragic losing battle against Fate; and here are adventurers of all nationalities, making money easily and spending it quickly. (Until the other day, the "night-life" of Harbin rivalled that of Klondyke during the gold-rush; but since the military situation along the frontier became critical, the Chinese authorities have killed all that by putting on a curfew.) Furthermore, Harbin is a Chinese city—part Chinese already, and destined, I fancy, to become more and more Chinese in the future—yet it is quite unlike any Chinese city to the south of it: unlike the Walled City at Mukden or the Walled City at Shanghai. For here in Harbin the Chinese are no more "autochthonous" than anybody else. Indeed, they are not even the first pioneers; for it was the Russians who made Harbin, and the Chinese, in entering upon this Russian heritage, have been learning to live a new life in the Russian style. Even if the Russian population of Northern Manchuria is exterminated or expelled by some political cataclysm or is slowly submerged under the rising Chinese tide, I think the impress of Russian civilization upon the new Chinese colonial community in these border provinces will remain to bear witness that the Russians were first in the land.

Will there be a cataclysm? The possibility cannot be ruled out, so long as the Sino-Soviet dispute over the control of the Chinese Eastern Railway remains unsettled; for although both parties strenuously deny that they are at war, there is perpetual fighting along the border. Yesterday, Harbin was agitated by news of the most serious raid across the frontier that has yet been made by the Soviet forces. If reports are to be believed, the Red Army has occupied not only the frontier-station of Manchouli, but the town of Hailar, some distance down the main-line of the C.E.R. in the Harbin direction. They have shot up Train No. 4 and massacred the passengers; they have wrecked the coal-mines of Chalai-nor, and the civil population, who had gone down the shaft in order to take refuge from the Soviet bombing-planes, have been caught like rats in a trap and drowned *en masse*. The Chinese troops have run away. Will the Red Army advance from Hailar to Harbin? Apparently there is no military obstacle to prevent them from occupying the entire zone of the C.E.R.; and certainly that would be a crushing rejoinder to the high-handed action of the local Chinese authorities last

June, when they started this trouble by putting a violent end to the joint Sino-Soviet control of the Railway, in contravention of the two Sino-Soviet treaties of 1925. Nevertheless, I do not expect to hear that the Soviet troops have entered Harbin; and I am rather inclined to believe the latest report, that they are already back on their own side of the frontier. No doubt the Soviet Government bitterly resents the loss of "face" which it has suffered from the Chinese coup of five months ago. Moreover, the Soviet Union cannot readily afford to lose all control, for ever, over a railway which—albeit in foreign territory—provides the direct line of communication between Siberia and Vladivostok. At the same time, these interests, great though they are, are probably not so important in the eyes of Soviet statesmen as their general policy of proving to the world that the Soviet Government is not as capitalist Governments are; and, in the last resort, Moscow might be prepared to sacrifice local interests for the sake of maintaining this precious pharisaical posture. At all costs, the Soviet Government must refrain from any action which might give the enemy occasion to blaspheme. It must give no ground for the insinuation that, when it comes to the point, the Soviet Union defends its interests abroad by the traditional militant methods of "Imperialism." On this account, I do not believe that the Red Army will now advance on Harbin or even remain in occupation of any portion of Chinese territory, even in the neighbourhood of the frontier. I fancy they will confine their operations to keeping the Chinese on the jump by a series of more and more vigorous raids, in the hope that in the end this will suffice to bring the Chinese to terms.

All the same, the Consular body at Harbin was discussing, yesterday, the possibility of evacuating the foreign women and children. And they are certainly wise to be prepared; for even if the Red Army refrains from marching upon Harbin, it is not improbable that the demoralized Chinese troops may retreat upon the city; and experience shows that cities in China have often more to fear from demoralized Chinese troops than from foreign invaders. Now if Harbin suffers this calamity, the nationals of the foreign Powers will be cared for by the local representatives of their Governments; but what will happen to the Russians—those poor sheep without a shepherd? There are many categories of Russians in Harbin nowadays; Russians who are Chinese citizens; Russians of the "White" emigration who are no longer citizens of any country; Russians who are Soviet citizens by force of circumstances without being Communists; and Russians who are both Soviet citizens and Communists by conviction. The Russians of these different categories may have little mercy on one another, but to a foreign observer they all appear equally pathetic. The militant Communists are now mostly in prison—some of them in chains—and even if there is no wanton inhumanity on the part of the Chinese, they are bound to suffer hardships, in their improvised quarters, as the winter comes on. Moreover, what is to happen to their families who are left stranded in Harbin without means of support? No doubt I saw some of their children in that commercial school which I visited yesterday morning. It is a remarkable school, magnificently equipped and organized. It was founded by the Chinese Eastern Railway for its employees, and is still maintained out of the Railway's revenues. Moreover, unlike the Railway, it is still a Russian affair; for though the Chinese education authorities have now placed a Chinese Commissioner at the head of the Education Service of the Railway Zone, they have left this and the other Russian schools in the Zone under Russian management, simply substituting non-Communist for Communist

Russians on the staff and insisting that Chinese shall be taught for three, and hereafter four, hours in the week. In educational affairs, as in the management of the railway, the personal relations between Chinese and Russians at Harbin seem to be excellent, notwithstanding the breach between the two Governments. It is the Chinese military authorities whom the Russian staff of the commercial school fear. Already, half the school building has been commandeered by the soldiery, and their mules are picketed in the playground. When I looked at the bright, eager, intelligent faces of those Russian boys and girls (Soviet citizens all) and then read the anxiety on the countenances of the Russian teachers, as they gazed out of the window at the Chinese soldiery encamped on their threshold, I wondered what the fate of these poor lost sheep would be. When I left Harbin last night, the atmosphere of fear and expectancy was growing tense; and though, in the tobacco company's office and in the fur shop—by force of habit—people were still doing business as usual when I passed by, I felt, while I watched them, that Harbin was a place where anything might happen; and I thought that the people of Harbin themselves were feeling that too.

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE.

## THE DUSTBIN AND AFTERWARDS

THE kitchen middens of races which have long since vanished from the earth are happy hunting-grounds to-day for anthropologists, and new chapters are being prefaced to history by those who dig into the dust of dead civilizations. It may be that when a few thousand years have elapsed, the refuse of to-day will have acquired a similar interest for the antiquaries of that distant time. In those days, when clever young men will be gaining doctorates for theses on the mural decorations of the underground railway stations of twentieth-century London, expeditions will be organized to the rubbish tips which are now accumulating on the outskirts of all our towns. There the learned will poke about with incredible patience, save with one another's theories, seeking to reconstruct from fragments of earthenware and of tin the habits of the men and women of to-day.

Thus a millennium or two will add romance to what at present is sordid and troublesome. The disposal of refuse is one of the minor vexatious problems of our civilization. Every town council is bothered about it; or if it is not, it probably ought to be. And the matter is scarcely less urgent in the country, where many a village has an unsightly and unhealthy heap on the bank of its stream or spoiling the beauty of a corner of its wood. Outside our great cities the refuse heaps are colossal. The Hornchurch dumps, which have been built up by the dustbins of London, are three-quarters of a mile long, a third of a mile wide, ninety feet high, and still growing.

It is only within the last ten years that the subject of refuse disposal has received serious and scientific study, but it is now rapidly coming into recognition, and there have already been a good many improvements in technique. It is being considered from many standpoints, financial, hygienic, æsthetic; and such a report\* as that written recently by Mr. Dawes, of the Ministry of Health, shows at once how important it is and how interestingly it can be treated.

If the householder could be persuaded to burn more

\* "Public Cleansing: Being a Report of an Investigation into the Public Cleansing Service in the Administrative County of London." By J. C. Dawes, M.I.Mech.E. (H.M. Stationery Office, 1929. Price 15s.)



rubbish, the problem would be very much eased. But the householder will not burn; and apart from unwillingness there are several difficulties in the way. In the first place, the English open grate makes the burning of many kinds of rubbish an evil smelling process. And then, gas is increasingly being used for heating and cooking, and it must be set down as a disadvantage against its many advantages that it offers no provision for destroying refuse.

To the dustbin, therefore, a great deal of rubbish must go. But what kind of dustbin shall it be? To the unreflecting it might seem that it does not matter within fairly wide limits what its measurements and design may be. But the cleansing experts are asking to-day for a standardized dustbin, specially adapted to a standardized dustcart with a low loading line. At present a good deal of refuse is spilled in the process of loading, and blows about the streets.

Your dustcart filled, and there is quite a deal of science and of art in the proper filling of a dustcart, what is to become of its contents? Destruction by fire is clean, but it is costly. And it is wasteful; there is much material which can be turned to account. Besides, one must remember posterity and have some consideration for the antiquarians of A.D. 4000. There is doubtless a certain amount which is best burned, but there is no need to burn it all; and the most up-to-date local authorities do not think of doing so.

Coast towns sometimes send their refuse out to sea. But that has not been found to be very satisfactory; tides and currents are tricky, and refuse has a way of washing in further along the shore. A difficulty which weighs even more with local authorities is that there may be days together when rough weather prevents putting out to sea, and storage becomes a very serious matter.

On the whole, the dump holds its own as the most convenient and inexpensive method of dealing with the refuse of a town. But there are dumps and dumps. You must know where to dump and how to dump, if you are to avoid unsightliness, evil smells, plagues of flies and rats, and other evils. There are dumps which are a horror to think of. I know of one place where vegetable refuse is put into a pond in a disused quarry; the bubbles from the putrefying matter rise through black, greasy water. Another dump thrusts a shoulder against a row of houses whose windows are wired as a protection against the dust of it. On many dumps a windy day means a sirocco of dirty paper, of straw, and of cabbage leaves. Other dumps catch fire, and for miles round the acrid, stifling smell is noticeable.

There is no need for such things to be, and they are not so often found now as formerly. Refuse is increasingly disposed of by "controlled tipping," an improved technique in which Bradford has led the way. The refuse is carefully sorted and, as far as possible, all large pieces of metal or of earthenware are taken away. There are, therefore, not likely to be air pockets in the dump, and the chances of fire are much diminished. The refuse is placed at the bottom of the dump (not at the top, as used to be the practice) in shallow layers, and is at once covered with earth or cinders. If this is properly done the dump can be turned to use remarkably soon. At Tynemouth a section was commenced in October, 1927, completed in February, 1928, and a crop of grass was grown on it in the summer of the same year. Such made ground is very suitable for tennis courts and other purposes of recreation; it should not be used for building.

In the towns, where the quantity of refuse is large, commercial disposal of the scrap metal presents few difficulties; but in villages and in country districts where there is no

systematic collection, the accumulation of old tins, worn-out kettles, and other débris is often a real problem. The Kent Community Council has made the experiment of arranging a collection at intervals at a small charge to the householder.

Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show the importance and the interest of the subject. Public opinion is sluggish, and even those who do care are often ignorant as to what can be done. Information as to the new technique is, however, being diffused, a process in which the Ministry of Health is taking a leading part. Statistics are now available as to comparative costs in different towns, and that is a great fillip to interest. There is certainly a possibility, and one would like to think a probability, that an ill-constructed, unsightly, and unhygienic dump may soon become a rarity.

HENRY A. MESS.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

THE Christmas lull is notoriously the deadest of all seasons in politics. If it is impossible for the parties to attain to the goodwill that rules in other walks of life, there is usually a pleasing conspiracy of silence, aided, of course, by the suspension of the newspapers. This Christmas has been notable for a most un-Christmasy outburst of rancour in the Labour Daily against the Liberal Party and its Parliamentary leader. It has coincided with, and doubtless forms part of, the propaganda regarding the possibility of an early election. The threat of another election has been used with brutal—and rather stupid—frankness, as a means of intimidating the Liberals. And all this because the Liberals would not refrain from doing their obvious duty in opposing the Coal Bill, a measure which has hardly a friend beside the coal owners and the tactically acquiescent miners. The Government was, it is true, seriously shaken by the big debate and their narrow squeak in the division, but whose fault was that, if not their own? I interpret all this pother about a general election and this unmeasured abuse of Mr. Lloyd George as a valiant effort to infuse courage into themselves and their followers. The DAILY HERALD is swashing the buckler. On the Coal Bill the Government might have had co-operation with the Liberals for the asking: they chose defiance at the beginning, to be followed, inevitably, by concessions after great and unnecessary damage had been done to Labour-Liberal relations. The DAILY HERALD would be better employed in urging upon the Labour Cabinet the wisdom of showing a little more democratic boldness and a little less of that reactionary opportunism which threatens to hinder their progress in domestic reform.

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Nor has Christmas seen any perceptible truce in the intertribal warfare within the Labour movement. It has been raging with extraordinary fury on Clydeside. The Scottish Independent Labour Party is torn with dissension. The revolt of the Maxtonites has been repudiated by the official body—the Scottish Council. To get the full flavour of the bitterness that exists one must study the lively pages of the Glasgow FORWARD. Here one finds Mr. Johnston, now a Minister, taking the tomahawk to Mr. Wheatley. Another article rebukes Mr. Maxton as a backslider from the full-blooded violence of his earlier professions. This has brought Mr. Wheatley on to the platform in defence of his leader of the moment. In Mr. Maxton, Mr. Wheatley, a man not specially conspicuous for reverence, has discovered "a new god." It is doubtful whether Mr. Maxton, who is one of the most modest of men, will

much relish this promotion to Olympus. He may remember that not very long ago—in or about 1924—Mr. Wheatley was prostrating himself before the shrine of MacDonald, or, if he does not remember, FORWARD is kindly aiding his memory. The bluff and violence of the DAILY HERALD is easy to understand. Mr. Lloyd George is useful to the Government's apologists as a whipping-boy, but the real culprits, the people who are causing the official leaders genuine and increasing alarm, are the Scottish whole-hoggers, the Jacobins of the abortive revolution.

A correspondent, of whose acuteness in controversy I am well aware, has written criticizing the view of our pre-war diplomacy recently expressed by Sir Ian Hamilton, and supported, in general terms, by myself. "That eminent soldier," he writes, "says that when the crisis came, Sir E. Grey did try to take the line of saying, 'Who mobilizes first must reckon first with England.' I cannot find in the White Paper any such intimation, and whilst such a declaration might be justifiable to-day in view of the Covenant and the Kellogg Pact, it would, I think, have been considered intolerably arrogant in 1914. Is it not grossly unjust to judge the statesmen of that terrible time in the light of the copious wisdom after the event which has accumulated since? It is constantly assumed that had there been no *entente* and no military conversations this country could have properly and safely permitted the subjugation of France and Belgium and permitted this at a moment when Germany was building up a great navy in addition to the greatest land force ever known. This is assumed, too, in face of the failure of the attempt to get an agreement on naval matters and the failure also of Lord Haldane's mission. 'Kappa' endorses Sir I. Hamilton's reference to military and naval conversations 'carried on secretly . . . behind the backs of some members of the Cabinet,' but Lord Grey points out ('Twenty-Five Years,' Vol. I., page 99) that the Cabinet was fully apprised 'two years before we were called upon to face the outbreak of war.' Given the *Entente*, which was lauded by both the great parties, the conversations would appear to be merely common sense. I loathe and abominate war, but those who were not prepared in any circumstances to embark upon it ought to have denounced most of our treaties and renounced all our dependencies."

On further reflection, I must admit the force of the objection that Sir Edward Grey was not in a position, at the crisis, to threaten the aggressor with the kind of intervention from this country which is only possible now—or in the rather vague future—to her as a member of the League of Nations. This is, I agree, wisdom after the event. But I think that the general case, which my friend proceeds to discuss, against the military commitments to France as, in fact, committing us to intervention, remains unshaken. The point is that we were not really free to take independent diplomatic action in an effort to stop the war. This is Sir Ian Hamilton's main point, and I do maintain that there is nothing in "Twenty-Five Years" which invalidates it. To say that we could not in any case have permitted Germany to attack France is a different point—one concerned with speculations about our national interests, and not with what we are now discussing, namely, whether or not at the crisis the British Government had a free hand. I do not admit for a moment that the existence of the *Entente* involved of necessity the military arrangements; it need not, and it ought not. The logical implication of my correspondent's view is that we should have openly backed up the *entente* by a military alliance. There is a case for that; but in fact that is precisely what

we did not do: instead we made the fatal attempt to have it both ways, with the result that when the crisis came our desperate last-minute effort to get back to the firm rock of independence proved to be impossible. And surely it is not denied that some members of the Cabinet, at least, knew, if any more, only a little more about the reality of our position in relation to France than the people. The latter knew absolutely nothing.

It is good to see that a beginning is to be made with an extension of hours at the national museums and galleries. The Victoria and Albert Museum, honourably distinguished for years past by its practice of keeping open until nine on two days in the week, is adding on another hour, and the Science Museum across the way—voted by the youth of London as the finest free show in the world—is now following its neighbour's example. The permission of the Treasury is only awaited before the Trustees of the British Museum fall in with the movement so far as the galleries are concerned. There is unfortunately small prospect of the Reading Room being made available for students at night. The authorities would like to return to the excellent pre-war practice in this respect, but the Royal Commission unaccountably omitted to recommend the evening opening of the Reading Room, while recommending it for some of the chief London collections. As to the National Gallery, one discovers with astonishment that provision for artificial lighting does not even exist. It is altogether deplorable that the national treasure houses should be barred and bolted during the hours when about nine out of ten of the workers have any chance of profiting by them. One hopes, now that a beginning has been made, cheese-paring at the Treasury will not prevent much longer the general opening of all the museums and galleries at night as a matter of course. Cities in "the provinces" are not so backward as London in this respect: there would be a riot of citizens if they were.

The usual end-of-the-year game of spotting the winners in literature is being played in the newspapers with as much zest as ever. I am not qualified to play it with any success, but perhaps my readers may forgive a much more modest attempt—that of making a list of those books, among the terrifying crowd fourteen thousand strong, I have read which stand out in memory as giving most pleasure. I must, of course, begin with novels—the general view about the supremacy of novels was expressed by the exquisite in PUNCH who, asked whether he would take champagne or another wine, responded, "Are there other wines?" The novel that gave me most satisfaction was "The Good Companions": a jolly good entertainment, appealing at the same time to a lover of Dickens and a Yorkshireman. (I see the pundits give this highest marks, which reconciles me to the pundits.) In poetry, "The Testament of Beauty," which I mean to read again and yet again, for it is worth it; in archæology, Mr. Woolley's little book on "The Sumerians," a delicious morsel of antiquity; in history, Professor Pollard's "Wolsey"—this masterly book is more history than biography; in science, "The Universe Around Us," and in biography, I can think of nothing that pleased me more than Lord David Cecil's life of Cowper, "The Stricken Deer," refreshing if only because here is the work of a clever young man, who is not afraid of sympathy. Among the autobiographies, I liked "Good-bye To All That," but "Undertones of War" has not been equalled this year, and I hope the flood of revelations, English or Teutonic, will now slacken or cease.

KAPPA.



## GOOD RESOLUTIONS

How conscience gnaws! The bitter jest  
 I once (alas) took pride in using—  
 How base, how cynical at best,  
 It seems to me, on Watch-night musing.  
 Convinced that readers must disdain  
 All rude, sarcastic contributions,  
 I send these verses to explain  
 MacFlecknoe's New Year Resolutions.

Resolved to quit the cynic's trade,  
 I'll swear (nor, while I'm swearing, doubt it),  
 That Baron Beaverbrook's "Crusade"  
 Has nothing of the "stunt" about it.  
 If Benn and Jowitt, one fine day,  
 Turn Tory (and retain their places),  
 "Their country needed them," I'll say,  
 "And circumstances alter cases."

When Thomas cracks his airy jokes  
 I'll never poison his enjoyment  
 By quoting figures of the folks  
 Who're suffering from unemployment.  
 Should Labour miss the clue to Coal  
 By spurning Liberal aid to find it,  
 I'll not believe their lofty rôle  
 Had aught of jealousy behind it.

When Churchill lectures on the need  
 For diplomatic tact and suavity,  
 When Birkenhead expounds the creed  
 Of Britain's Bar, with sombre gravity,  
 Without the vestige of a smile  
 I'll praise the wisdom they have spoken.  
 I'll look through rose-pink glasses, while  
 My New Year vows remain unbroken!  
 MACFLECKNOE.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## VIRGINIA WOOLF UPON WOMEN

SIR,—Miss Orr's reaction to my review of "A Room of One's Own" formed for me the chief surprise of Christmas day. I did not know until I read Miss Orr's letter that I had proved anything at all in my article, far less so many contradictory facts. Nor had it ever occurred to me that I might be suspected of casting any sort of eye on the late Home Secretary. I was quite unconscious that I had declared my sex damned—I have never wished to belong to any other. I had not the slightest idea that Mrs. Woolf was pointing to the other side of an abyss and saying that "every little helps," and implying, if not actually saying, that "a little courage never comes amiss." Miss Orr mentions abysses several times; I think that I have said enough to show how wide is that which lies between her conception and mine of what Mrs. Woolf meant, and between her conception of what the review meant and what I intended it to mean. It requires more than a little courage to attempt any bridge building between Miss Orr and me, and with the characteristic pusillanimity of the woman anti-feminist I might shirk the task, were it not that I should not like those of your readers who have not read or have forgotten my review to accept Miss Orr's account of it entirely without qualification.

I did not suppose, as Miss Orr says, "that Mrs. Woolf was not arriving at anything in particular." I thought that the book, quite apart from its intrinsic merits, could not fail to be of value in the civilizing of public opinion about women, and in the education of public opinion about art. I enjoyed reading it, and as a woman and a writer I was grateful to Mrs. Woolf for having written as she did. But I disagreed with her in her estimate of the extent to which improved conditions would affect the production of works of genius by women. I think that if Mrs. Woolf had lived a hundred years ago she would have given us as strik-

ing proofs then as she has to-day of her genius. And I also think that although a hundred years hence the Miss Orrs and Miss Irvines may have multiplied beyond all reckoning, the Virginia Woolfs and Emily Brontës will be as rare as ever—probably rarer than ever. I do not pretend to be able to prove any of these things—they are merely possibilities which my observation of life (which has been short) and my reading (which has been limited) incline me to consider probable.

We know almost as little of the actual origin of genius as of the actual origin of life. Any general efforts that are made to encourage genius bring in a harvest of inferior and derivative work, and modern civilization on the whole is apparently unfavourable to the development of the supreme artist. These considerations seem to me to supersede any present discussion as to the sex of the artist of the future. As feminists and anti-feminists we are inclined not only to count our chickens before they are hatched, but to dispute passionately which will be cocks and which hens, whereas the real difficulty is the increasing scarcity of eggs.—Yours, &c.,

LYN LL. IRVINE.

## BIRTH-CONTROL INFORMATION

SIR,—Mrs. Hubback's reply to my letter appears more substantial than it really is. I complained that, in deference to certain religious sensibilities, an attempt is being made to change the basis of the demand for birth-control knowledge. Mrs. Hubback replies that an attempt is being made to "widen" the demand.

Hitherto the demand has been that the existing ban on the information being given from Maternity and Child Welfare Centres should be removed, and that mothers who ask for the information at these Centres should be given it. Successive Ministers of Health have refused to remove this ban except by direction from the House of Commons.

The new formula, championed by Mrs. Hubback, is "to ask the Minister of Health and Public Health Authorities to recognize the desirability of making available medical information on methods of birth-control to married people who need it on medical grounds, or who ask for it." I submit that this wording justifies my inference that religious prejudices have been considered. It does not ask that the information shall be given, or even that it "shall be made available"; all that "the Minister of Health and the Public Health Authorities" are asked to do is "to recognize the desirability" of making it available.

No one has ever supposed that every Maternity and Child Welfare Centre would be in a position to give this information immediately Parliament permitted it to do so, and no one has ever wished to dictate "the precise building from which it should be done." What has been asked is that Parliament should remove the ban of the Ministry of Health, and give the local authorities a lead to provide birth-control information as part of the regular service of the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres.

Instead of using its powerful political position to urge Parliament to remove the ban on birth-control information, by means of a free vote in the House of Commons (promised by Mr. MacDonald in the last election) for which no Party can be held by the Roman Catholics to be responsible, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship is pursuing a policy by which the issue of birth-control will remain dormant during the present Parliament.—Yours, &c.,

R. G. RANDALL.

## THE WESTMINSTER ABBEY SACRISTY

SIR,—The Committee of Experts formed to review any alternative proposals for the Sacristy has, we are informed, come to a decision, and that the report will be shortly presented.

It would be idle to anticipate and to attempt to forecast its decision.

In his able article on the Sacristy, Mr. A. Trystan Edwards, in THE NATION of the 14th ultimo, remarks that

"it may be well to summarize some of the objections to the Sacristy scheme as represented by the model. In the first place, however, a critic must realize the architect's difficulties." Mr. Trystan Edwards omits to mention two difficulties with which Mr. Tapper had to contend: both most probably caused by the authorities' earnest desire to meet what they thought would be objections to the scheme on the grounds of expense and of the erection being regarded as obtrusive. At any rate, it is possible that with the best motives possible, there may have been limitations in these respects.

If the model had been designed on the lines, say, of the beautiful Vestry or Sacristy of the Church of St. Ouen, at Rouen, there are many eminent architects and artists the opinion of one of whom I feel sure would carry great weight even with those of that profession who have severely criticized the to-be-abandoned scheme—who would agree that such an addition would enhance the beauty of the Abbey itself, even on the site which had been proposed.—Yours, &c.,

A. B. SAYCE.

### "OUR SCANDINAVIAN COUSINS"

SIR,—A review of "History of Sweden" by Professor Hallendorff and myself appeared in your paper on October 19th, but has only a few days ago been brought to my notice. In his critical survey, the reviewer finds fault with the style, which, according to him, is "childish and flimsy." I do not wish to comment on this pronouncement, which is a matter of personal taste and is at variance with that of other English critics, but I cannot refrain from giving the epithet "childish" to the review itself, although it occurs in your much-esteemed paper. Had the reviewer taken the trouble to read the book at all carefully, he would not have committed a number of historical mistakes which disfigure the article on "Our Scandinavian Cousins."

We are told that, during the seventeenth century, "the Swedish State was more powerful than it had been since the days of Canute." The reviewer seems to think that Canute was King of Sweden, which to us Swedes is a complete surprise. Equally astonishing is the assertion that Canute was ever considered by his contemporaries as a possible candidate for the Imperial throne, and the same doubt attaches to Gustavus Adolphus. The statement that "the Danes and Norsemen who invaded England and fixed the racial character of the Britons, came from modern Sweden" is not found in the authors' text but in the preface written by Baron Palmstierna, who has based this observation on a pronouncement by Prof. G. M. Trevelyan. My own view is that only a portion of those Danes and Norwegians who attacked and, to a certain extent, settled in Great Britain, came from the old Danish-Norwegian provinces which now belong to Sweden.

The reviewer seems also to suppose that Calvinism was the particular form of faith adopted at the Reformation of the Swedish Church. Even a very superficial study of our book ought to have shown that the Swedes are, and have been, Lutherans, and that Calvinism was ardently opposed by the Swedish clergy. It is an exaggeration to say that "despotism" prevailed in eighteenth-century Sweden, the only example of despotic rule being the last years of the reign of Charles XII. (d. 1718). This century was instead characterized by the most marked Parliamentary rule. We are not able to concur in the flattering remark that, "rarely were despots so enlightened as they were in Sweden" during the eighteenth century. The kings, except Gustavus III., were the very opposite of "enlightened despots." Finally, the reviewer makes the mistake of pointing out that Sweden and England were in opposite camps during the Napoleonic Wars in 1814. They were instead faithful allies at that time, which was one of the chief reasons why Norway was forced to accept the union with Sweden. The purely formal breach with England which Sweden had to make under pressure from Napoleon, and which must have been in the mind of the reviewer, occurred in 1810 and lasted until 1812.

That a reviewer in one of the most responsible English papers is guilty of such mistakes in a short article, can only

be explained by the fact that he has not taken his task seriously—Yours, &c.,

ADOLF SCHUCK.

Stockholm,

[Our Reviewer writes: "I was quite aware that Canute was not a Swede, though I now see I expressed myself badly; also that the Swedes were not Calvinists. I was, in the latter case, endeavouring to contrast Swedish enlightenment with Anglo-Scotch Calvinism to the advantage of the Swedes. I also confess that I too hastily generalized from Gustavus III. to other eighteenth-century despots. But Gustavus III. has always seemed to me to stand as a symbol of eighteenth-century enlightenment. Further, I must apologize for saying 1814 when I should have said 1812. I am sorry that what was meant to be a pæan on Sweden has so redounded to the discredit of the panegyrist.]

## THE CRAFTSMAN

"Without some skill to exercise and devote himself to, man remains a half-grown, stunted, and essentially miserable object, irrespective of whether he lives in a palace or a slum."—Principal Jacks in "Constructive Citizenship."

THANKS to the efforts of the Rural Industries Bureau, a good deal of public interest is being attracted to the country craftsman. Listeners-in have just been hearing the unaccustomed voices of blacksmith and wheelwright, and they have been charmed by Mr. George Marston's account of the renaissance of village craftwork evoked by the Women's Institutes—an artistic and social event of the first magnitude. It is just as well that the British Isles should hear these voices calling and take to heart their message, for the decline in village industries goes on remorselessly in spite of all efforts to stay it. Village life to-day is infinitely more varied and attractive than in pre-war days, and the market for the craftsman's wares is in far better case; but men continue to fall out, and there is only a trickle of lads towards the forge, the saddler's shop, and the carpenter's bench. If reinforcements fail to appear, then in a few more years, so Colonel Little, the Director of the Bureau, predicts, we shall be faced with the virtual extinction of our hereditary craftsmen so far as the countryside is concerned.

The Rural Industries Bureau does wisely then in striving to strengthen and consolidate the position of the remnant that survives, a task in which the Rural Community Councils are co-operating with immense spirit and enthusiasm.

These Councils are taking part in the rural industries movement in fourteen counties, and in eleven of these there already exist craftsmen's co-operative societies or guilds by means of which the men are taking the first steps towards organized marketing and other concerted action. The exhibitions of craft work at agricultural shows are so far the best known result, and in these the wrought iron work of the country blacksmiths is the most noticeable. The Master Farriers' Association has thrown itself into the cause with great keenness, and this is a case where utility and beauty go together. Not a few of the surviving masters of the English village smithies still have a high tradition of decorative beauty and skill in their blood, and can alternate shoeing and repairs with the making of an exquisite latch for a church door, a firescreen of gracious design, or a gate worthy of an Elizabethan manor house.

The spread of this movement calls for the help of men of good will in every county, who will bring home to country residents of all classes the urgency of the case of the rural skilled workman. Would the country consumer really be content to find that there was no carpenter, no blacksmith, no bricklayer to be found but in the nearest



city or borough? And is it not to his advantage to see that the work of these men should cease to be merely an occasional convenience for repairs, as it often is now, and becomes again a solid means of living? The amenities of rural England, the right of access to them, the preservation of its antiquities, the charm of its old cottages and houses, appeal strongly to country and town dwellers alike, and active societies have been formed to preserve them. Cannot these same lovers of external beauty appreciate the human beauty and value of a healthy economic basis of village life, with varieties of occupation and experience, and the need of preserving its finest element, the hardly replaceable skill handed down to it? The modest effort of finding out, before resorting to great stores at a distance supplied by great factories at a further distance, whether your neighbour the village carpenter can make your fowlhouse at a reasonable price, with perhaps a little help to a modern design, is not too much to pay for taking a hand in this branch of rural preservation.

In the case of the utility work of the village carpenter, blacksmith, and saddler, the spread of local interest in it must be relied on for reviving the market. But when all has been done that can be done locally, when local marketing is better organized, and the old guild spirit revived in modern form, when improved equipment has been installed, and the right kind of instruction for boys provided—reforms which are going on apace as the English countryside reckons pace—more yet remains to be done. If artistic rural craft work—supposing it may for the moment be distinguished from the utility products of manual skill—is to be preserved and revived in its natural seed bed, we cannot rely on the consuming capacity of the country districts alone to save it. Agriculture has been hit too long and too hard. The support of the towns must be enlisted.

And this, one would think, ought not to be such a difficult matter. Many people are acutely or sub-acutely conscious of a growing aesthetic *malaise*, traceable to an undue preponderance in their homes and surroundings of machine-made standardized objects—decorative and otherwise. This feeling of discomfort is not due to the sufferers' nerves or fancies, but to a chronic and genuine discordance between the individual and the things that bear him company. To be surrounded by objects that have nothing to say, or that say the wrong things, does not make for happiness. As fresh eggs and butter appeal to the jaded appetite after a diet of tinned meats, so do the craftsman's wares bring relief to the surfeited victim of mass production.

Professor Lethaby in his notice of the Women's Institutes' exhibition discourses in an illuminating way in *HOME AND COUNTRY* of the vitamins which he there discovered:—

"If I were setting up housekeeping now, I should want a score of things from this Show—quilts, rugs, simple embroideries, and the like. The traditional quilts particularly attracted me; they carry with them some essence which may not be obtained at 'the stores.' Such a way of buying things for our houses would be better in every way than the custom of collecting antique objects which has been so much practised during the last two generations. This custom encourages antique dealers, but discourages makers, and it results in giving a pawnshop look to our houses. Suitably guided and properly appreciated, these exhibitions of home-made things might bring back fashions of sound and pleasant house-furnishings which would be smiling, peaceful, and obviously right, not at all strange, stilted, and 'arty' looking. The Women's Institutes may yet save the home crafts in this commerce-racked country."

Naturally, Mr. Lethaby would like to buy things cunningly devised for actual homes, things designed to

appease the "retail element in human nature"; but it so happens—and herein lies the secret of much of the Institutes' artistic success—that most of these articles are not for sale. The renovation and beautification of the home may or may not be incompatible with making for the market, but the craftswomen of the villages have usually so far decided to produce first and foremost for use and enjoyment, and no one who has followed their proceedings from the beginning can doubt their wisdom.

This *cul de sac* need not, however, unduly discourage townfolk in the quest for country wares, for they can be bought nowadays in quite a number of shops which the Bureau has supplied with lists of accredited craft workers. Such wares, including the quilts to which Mr. Lethaby refers, can also be inspected and bought at Country Industries, Ltd., 26, Eccleston Street, Victoria, S.W.1, a co-operative dépôt designed to establish touch between town and country. They bear a strong family resemblance to the choice Institute handiwork, being in fact turned out by village craftsmen who, as likely as not, are husbands and sons of Institute members, and whose work, rightly placed, may be trusted to win Mr. Lethaby's approval as "smiling, peaceful, and obviously right." Certainly the countryside is the appropriate place for getting these happy effects, and as Mr. Lethaby says, "Nature is always there to be drawn upon, and is always fresh."

But there is no doubt that an uneasy feeling as to the soundness of this movement prevails very widely. The suggestion or the suspicion is that the taste for handwork is a fad, that the revival of craftsmanship is unnecessary, and the development of village life, except in the form of amusements, a lost cause. Why try to perpetuate a system so old-fashioned, so hopelessly handicapped? Why seek officiously to keep alive a class of men whose existence is economically indefensible and whose methods are obsolete? What matters it if our right hand forget its cunning, when there are machines to take its place?

May it be submitted that economic curiosity must go a little deeper than this if the place which skill takes in the modern industrial world is to be truly assessed? The craftsman is by no means obsolete in industry. Even large-scale production is still dependent on his skill, as we may learn—to take a definite case—from Sir John Ellis, managing director of John Brown & Co., who, in a recent address to the Blacksmiths' Company, has described the intimate and indispensable part played by the craftsman in turning out great forgings for propeller shafts and the like. But let us turn to another branch of great industry, the decorative side of mass production. Take Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith's recent speech at the exhibition of "Industrial Art for Slender Purses": he was, of course, permanent head of the Board of Trade for many years, and later economic adviser to the Government, and when he speaks of the artist craftsman's place in the scheme of things, we are bound to listen. He tells us that "the artist craftsman supplies a fundamental need, and gives life and stimulus to industry by showing the capabilities of new materials, processes, and methods of treatment."

"Let no one think that because the methods of the artistic craftsman were far removed from those of large-scale industry he had therefore become or was becoming unnecessary to the modern world. Far from that, this pioneer or experimental work was as the very breath of life to industrial art, which if the artistic craftsman were to die out would inevitably tend to decay."

We take it that Sir Hubert's pioneer and experimenting craftsman is the modern rather than the traditional skilled worker. The designers employed in industry are largely people who have been trained in Colleges of Art, and who

find on going out into the world that there are two chief openings for them. One, the largest, is teaching—and the children taught, if they wish to adopt artistic craftsmanship as an occupation, have the same choice or lack of choice before them. The other is making designs to be carried out by machinery: few can hope to support themselves by carrying through their own artistic ideas.

Now machine art has its place. It may offer us synthetic vitamins in place of the genuine thing, and it may give us imperfect renderings of the artist's ideas, but who will deny that it has cheered up our rooms and given us more satisfying surroundings? There is little doubt, however, that the possibilities of industrial art, such as they are, are seriously limited by the divorce of the artist from the workshop and the consequent impoverishment of his work. His experimental workshop, if he have one, is not the same thing as a workshop in full economic blast where the craftsman is in constant, intimate warfare with his material; and without the actual trading workshop and the possibility of making the public affectionately familiar with its products, it is more than doubtful if an industrial art worthy of the name can have any firm and wide foundation in public taste. People who do not know a good ladder chair when they see it will continue to prefer shapeless and over-decorated suites to furniture with better lines. Nobody wishes to lose the immense civilizing benefits of mass production of standardized articles, but if it is to be chastened and subdued to durable human liking it must be put to a test which can only be applied through the self-supporting craftsman working independently of it; and may it not be added that the man who provides the touchstone ought to be more at home at the anvil or the bench than in the studio? The best use of industrial art surely is to form a tolerable background and accompaniment for such products of the craftsman as can be obtained, and this combination may take effect even where purses are slender.

VAUGHAN NASH.

## THE ITALIAN EXHIBITION

IT would be futile in an article to pretend to give any sort of general idea of the vast and infinitely varied collection of Italian art at Burlington House. However hard the Committee may have tried to make it representative and to keep due proportion between schools and periods, the chances of what was and what was not available were bound to decide in the end. It is not representative indeed, but Italian art is so vast that when one sees this collection it requires some effort to realize what is left out. I shall despair then of anything like method, and content myself with scattered impressions.

But first one general impression: there is no doubt that most people who care for art at all are in love with Italian art. Yes, it is exactly that that explains its peculiarly intoxicating delight; that explains our complicity with what in any other art we should frown at. We are in love with the Italian temperament as it expresses itself in art, with its childlike directness and exuberance of feeling, its want of self-consciousness, its predominant gaiety, its delicate sensuality.

And it is in the primitives that this temperament seems to come through in its purity. There are times later on when it gets more self-conscious, when it begins to think of what the spectator may be thinking, and then at once the charm wears thin; we can be critical, and indeed when in the Seicento the exuberance gets tinged with

affectation we may suspect that they are abusing their power over us.

But whenever the Italian temperament is seen unalloyed it always attaches us by its unreflecting ease and unconsciousness. If French artists generally go straight and remain honest to their experiences, it is largely because they have seen intellectually the futility of doing otherwise; the Germans never have seen this, and never have in consequence ceased to produce self-conscious and entirely unconvincing records of the will to art. But the Italians seem to be so naturally absorbed in just what they feel that they never hesitate for a moment. It never seems to occur to them to wonder whether they are being too odd and peculiar or, what is more dangerous, whether they are being odd enough. This comes out most perhaps in artists like Giovanni di Paolo and Piero di Cosimo, whose quaintness—crankiness almost—would have been deliberately exploited anywhere else. Being Italian they seem unconscious of their own idiosyncracies, and never become half as original in the bad sense as they might.

It is the absence of any subjective distortions of experience which gives Italian artists their transparent simplicity, and enables them to be at once so personal and so little conscious of being so. Again and again we see an artist, perhaps only of the second or third rank, become a vivid personality with only the slightest divergence from the common property of his school and time.

Let us begin then with Mons. Stoclet's exquisite little Nativity (No. 14), attributed to Giotto. Is it Giotto or not? I cannot say. I can find no better name, only I know nowhere in Giotto of anything quite so gay, so sparkling. Nowhere have I seen his figures converse with quite the vivacity of these angels and shepherds, or have quite the naturalness of these faces and expressions. But who else could have given to this purely traditional Byzantine design this consistency and logical coherence, or sat his Joseph so solidly on the earth, and who else drew sheep so absurdly and so delightfully? I say who else, but close by is a diptych attributed to Baroncio which is almost on the same level though utterly distinct. Perhaps Giotto would have found his way better in composing the Crucifixion, but even Giotto never did anything finer than the Adoration, anything more vital and intense in gesture and regard and more monumental in its plastic drawing, though it almost needs a magnifying glass to see it. There is nothing more curious than to note how intense is the vitality of gesture, how significant the poses in the art of these early decades of the fourteenth century, nor how quickly these qualities faded into the dull, competent, decorative stuff of the second half. One sees here Daddi (No. 50), who in his youth had caught a spark from Giotto's fire, plodding with workmanlike dexterity through all the lifeless details of his worthy production.

It is curious to note that the Siennese never suffered quite the same academic blight. They kept alive a fantastic freedom of invention which flared up into extravagant fairy-story inventions in the fifteenth century just when the Florentines, recalled to life by the great generation of 1400, were doing more serious and important things. It is worth while to pursue these delightful childish story-tellers into the South room where, in a series of panels of the life of John the Baptist, Giovanni di Paolo runs riot. Or to note in No. 48 how a later and more learned artist like Francesco di Giorgio uses a deliberate falsification of perspective to give oddity and unreality to the scene in order to suit his imaginative perversity.

The Florentines, when invention failed, became merely correct and competent, but with the fifteenth century there



came the new dream of reducing art to law, a dream that has more than once haunted artists' minds, and has, paradoxically enough, given to their work a new passion. Whilst they seemed absorbed in perspective and anatomy they saw a new significance in men's gestures, and once more their figures live, but with a new life, more concentrated, more vigorously individual than even Giotto's. Hence Masaccio's stupendous Crucifixion (No. 133), one of the few pictures in the world which seems to make nonsense of all guesses at how its overwhelming effect on the imagination is produced. One feels that one is in a world where causes do not produce their ordinary effects. The types are traditional, the relative positions are traditional, there is no new invention, and yet all seems brought from some region more remote from ordinary experience than the wildest dreams of the maddest visionary. I can dimly trace the trajectory of a mind like Botticelli's, even an El Greco leaves one clues, with Raphael I at least seem to know much more than perhaps I really do about his processes, but here speculation is baffled altogether. By what magic do these forms convey thus directly to the spirit the sombre fire of Masaccio's passion? With Masaccio's Crucifixion Florentine art was at once brought back into the paths laid down by Giotto, and its further tendencies clearly indicated. From this point Michelangelo and Raphael were dimly discernible, even though some of the intervening periods might wander from the straight line. But of that there is no room to speak now.

ROGER FRY.

\*. Further articles by Mr. Roger Fry on the Italian Exhibition will appear in our next two issues.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### "People Like Us," Arts Theatre.

**M**R. VOSPER'S already well-known censored play, "People Like Us," at the Arts Theatre, is, as everyone agrees, head over heels more intelligent and effective than the ordinary article. The first act is, perhaps, unnecessary, and we should have been given more of the relations of the husband and wife and the wife and lover. We were made to take too much for granted. Nobody, however, can deny that we get interested in the characters at once, and continue being interested till the end. Unfortunately, perhaps, the play needs consummate acting, depending as it does on the contrast between people who have more or less come to terms with existence and an over-romantic woman, who "dramatizes" her whole life. The company at the Arts Theatre did not quite succeed in the extremely difficult task of appearing completely natural in contrast with the heroine of the tragedy. Nor did the actress herself quite succeed in stressing the moment, when, despite herself, she is dragged back to reality. But this may have been partly Mr. Vosper's fault. I have a suspicion that the heroine's final outburst is not as well written as much of the rest of the play. But, after all, "People Like Us" is a very clever piece of work. I do not approve of the censorship. But if plays are to be censored, I am glad they should be so out of respect for the feelings of murderers' families rather than out of respect for the feelings of Cabinet Ministers, whose delicacy the censorship was instituted to shroud.

### "Charley's Aunt," Daly's Theatre.

I suppose I have seen "Charley's Aunt" well over a dozen times in the last twenty years, but until this year I happened never to have done so in a critical capacity. I went intending to stay for half an hour or so, by which time I should have assembled a few ideas on the subject of antediluvian technique and the psychology of "healthy" humour. Not so: I forgot everything but that I was enjoying myself consumedly, and stayed till the end. And thus, I suppose, it will always be. There is something

about this ridiculously mechanical, hopelessly out-of-date piece of buffoonery that has a quite irresistible appeal. I often wonder whether it would not gain by being played more as it must have been played originally—more, indeed, as Mr. James E. Page still plays the amorous Spettigue—or, alternatively, what would be the effect of a little modernization of the language here and there, in the interests of the verisimilitude which one cannot help expecting at the opening, confronted as one is by modern-looking undergraduates in modern clothes. At any rate, the present company are well up to the standards set them, particularly Mr. Richard Cooper as the "Aunt," and Mr. Arthur Bell as the Colonel. Mr. Jevan Brandon-Thomas is a little lacking in lightness and colour in the long part of Jack.

### "A Warm Corner," Princes Theatre.

This farce owes much to its producer, Mr. Leslie Henson, and more still to its comedians, notably Mr. W. H. Berry, Miss Connie Ediss, and Mr. Austin Melford. Whether it would be tolerable in the French original one cannot say, but the present version has been bowdlerized quite skilfully by Mr. Arthur Wimperis and another into one of those complicated beehives about jaunts on the Riviera which depend less upon plot than upon quick movement and the insertion of funny lines. Mr. Berry's touch is just what was wanted. I liked particularly his description of his motoring entourage—he rides in a Rolls-Royce himself, then comes a some-thing-or-other landaulette full of cigars, then an Austin Seven with the matches. It is hard to see how "A Warm Corner" is entitled to a place among the holiday plays, since its humours, obvious though they be, are of rather a sophisticated derivation; but that children do enjoy it I have the evidence of my eyes and ears.

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Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, January 4th.—

Royal Choral Society. Handel's "Messiah," at the Royal Albert Hall, 2.30.

Sunday, January 5th.—

London Symphony Orchestra Concert, Royal Albert Hall.

Film Society. "New Babylon," Tivoli, Strand, 2.30.

Monday, January 6th.—

"Man and Superman," at the Royal Court Theatre. "Trial by Jury" and "The Pirates of Penzance," at the Savoy.

Pastel Society's Art Exhibition, Royal Institute Galleries.

Tuesday, January 7th.—

Mr. Roger Fry's illustrated Lecture on Italian Art, Queen's Hall, 8.

Friday, January 10th.—

Hamilton Harty Symphony Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

OMICRON.

## ESCAPE

WHEN the fine metal of the brain  
Has lost its virgin brilliance  
And ringing keen resilience,  
And, sleepy and brittle, cannot bear the strain  
And sudden onrush of train after train  
That life drives over it relentlessly  
Again and yet again,  
Till it may snap disastrously  
At any instant—then comes death, the ganger,  
To tear us from the permanent way; and, cast  
On the scrap heap, we are free at last  
Of the intolerable stress and clangour  
Of traffic thundering down life's thoroughfare:  
And surely it is good to lie  
Quietly rusting under the quiet sky,  
Resolving gradually in sun and rain,  
Till we are one again  
With our original element of air?

WILFRID GIBSON.

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

MR. CHESTERTON AND MR. BELLOC

THE volume and loudness of Catholic propaganda at the present time is an interesting phenomenon, and nowhere can it be studied more profitably than in the works of Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc, the two most distinguished of English Catholic litterateurs. Anyone who wants to discover what it all means and what it all amounts to may be recommended to try the following books which have recently been published: "A Companion to Mr. Wells's 'Outline of History,'" by Hilaire Belloc (Sheed & Ward, 8s. 6d.); "The Thing," by G. K. Chesterton (Sheed & Ward, 7s. 6d.); "G. K. C. as M.C.," a collection of thirty-seven Introductions by G. K. Chesterton, edited by J. P. de Fonseka (Methuen, 7s. 6d.). And if he throws in "The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas," by Etienne Gilson, translated by Edward Bullough, and edited by the Rev. G. A. Elrington (Heffer, Second Edition, 8s. 6d.), which has received the imprimatur, he will probably add to his knowledge of that great thirteenth-century theologian who means so much to our modern intellectuals who have turned Catholic or Anglo-Catholic.

It should be said by way of preliminary that Mr. Belloc's book mentioned above is a cheap second edition of the final attack launched by him in his campaign against Mr. Wells's "Outline of History." Mr. Chesterton's "The Thing" is a book of essays on Roman Catholicism, consisting mainly in attacks upon non-Catholics and partially of an attempt to explain why Mr. Chesterton is a Catholic. His other book is literary, but even here Mr. Chesterton can rarely for long keep off the subjects or persons connected with his religious controversies. In the tone and atmosphere of their controversies, the two writers are completely different. There are four great divisions in the human race: there are people who by nature tend to like things, and there are people who by nature tend to like persons; there are people who by nature tend to hate things, and there are people who by nature tend to hate persons. Mr. Chesterton is not naturally a good hater or a frequent hater; instinctively he seems to be moved by his personal and impersonal likes, not dislikes. He never, therefore, appears to be quite at home in religious controversy, and it speaks well for the efficient discipline of the Catholic Church that it should have induced a man so unfitted naturally for the task to undertake it. He is such a sympathetic man that one feels that he has the greatest difficulty to prevent himself sympathizing both with his opponents and their views, and he often has to assure us (or is it Authority?) that he is not being irreverent because he is treating them and his subject with humour and without hatred. One cannot imagine even an Anglican, even a scientist, even an intellectual, whom Mr. Chesterton has to treat as the blindest and stupidest worm that ever crawled outside the Catholic fold, bearing Mr. Chesterton any ill-will, for he does it all so good-humouredly, with such repressed sympathy for the poor worm. Mr. Belloc is the exact opposite. He is a magnificent hater; he hates persons and, when he cannot get a person to hate—this, of course, happens very rarely—he falls back on the second best, he hates things. One doubts whether he ever has an unalloyed "like," whether he does not always like one thing because he hates another.

One feels that Mr. Chesterton likes beer because he likes beer, but that Mr. Belloc only likes beer because he hates abstainers. In the Catholic Church he has found the religion made for him; it gives him infinite scope for hating things and persons, hating bad Catholics and bad and good heretics, hating people who hate Catholicism, hating scientists, hating even poor old Darwin, hating the unscientific, hating Jews and infidels, Germans, Americans, all people who are not "Latin" or "European," hating all "intellectuals," and all people who do not use their intellects, hating social reformers, capitalists, socialists, conservatives, liberals, trade unionists, and—if it be impossible to find any other ground for hatred—anyone to whom you may conveniently fix the label "modern."

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As for the arguments and propaganda of Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc, they are extremely effective—for those who are already Roman Catholics. In his long controversy with Mr. Wells, Mr. Belloc never for one moment faces the crux of the argument. Whenever he gets near it, he sheers off and begins putting up dummies, and knocking them over with great courage and vigour. When he gets to the incarnation, with great solemnity he tells us, on page 132, that it is "the most important subject in all History," and it is continually implied that the historian who does not accept the truth of the incarnation is incapacitated from writing history. Again, on page 137, the question of its truth is "the one essential question in human History." But on page 138 we are told that this one essential question in human History "is not a matter of historical proof"! Mr. Belloc believes it because the Church tells him to believe it, but he never explains why he accepts a historical fact as true without historical proof on the authority of the Church, while he would refuse to accept other historical facts of the same kind as true without historical proof if vouched for by the authority of other Churches. In all these books we are continually being fobbed off with analogies and the most bombastic boastings about the achievements of the Catholic Church and Latin culture and "European" civilization, all to the accompaniment of a denigration of everything non-Catholic. Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton are mentally in exactly the same state as those half-wits, on whom they justifiably pour such scorn, the people who write books to prove that everything of value in the world has been the work of "Nordic" man. Mr. Belloc simply substitutes Catholic for Nordic, and apparently gets precisely the same kind of self-satisfaction. He is suffering from the narrowest kind of cultural parochialism. A man would be very ignorant or very foolish who denied the great and splendid contributions of Catholicism in its time to European tradition and culture, but to pretend, as Mr. Belloc does, that all that is good in European tradition, art, and culture comes from the Catholic Church, is to degrade himself to the same level of sophistry or ignorance. The unfortunate Mr. Chesterton even has to argue that "King Lear," "Paradise Lost," and "Pilgrim's Progress" are products of the Catholic Church. We shall soon be told that "The Apology" and "Candide" spring from the same source.

LEONARD WOOLF.



## REVIEWS

## WILLIAM I., 1066, WILLIAM II., 1087

*The Kings of England, 1066-1901.* By the HON. CLIVE BIGHAM, C.M.G., C.B.E. (Murray. 21s.)

WHY are kings so interesting? How is it that the English, who so early robbed kings of their divinity, have so belatedly remained their worshippers? Of course, a good deal is explicable on historical grounds. A sturdy radical in the nineteenth century was usually a republican, and it was not until after 1870 that Disraeli, the Empire, and the new commercial Press started turning the new democracy into king-worshippers. But that is not the whole story. We need the social psychologist as well as the historian to explain why Mr. Bigham's book on the Kings of England is sure of an extensive sale. It seems to be written for the grown-up rather than for the child: the references to royal intrigues seem to rule it out as a school text-book. It is only saved from utter banality by one thing. Mr. Bigham has taken the trouble to collect quotations from contemporary writers and to insert, amid his own commonplace observations upon the Henrys and Edwards, the first Charles and the second Charles and the solid row of immovable Georges, the more lively comments of men like Matthew of Paris, William of Malmesbury, Pepys, and Dr. Johnson.

Mr. Bigham's survey of English history is like a stamp album, and it will, no doubt, have the same attraction for collectors of all ages. The familiar "sets" are complete; one turns over the page, and there, sure enough, just where one expected him, is Henry VIII., fat and brutal, following upon the heels of the miserly Henry VII., and after the pious but shifty Charles I. (where one looks for an exciting break in the series) we proceed at once to the gay but incorrect Charles II., not even recalling Cromwell's shameless breach with tradition. A familiar portrait precedes each king. And here, had Mr. Bigham that sort of mind, a whole crop of interesting speculations might begin. All the Tudors appear with the same lightly pencilled eyebrows, the same shaped foreheads and noses, and the same tight mouths; every Stuart is the very pattern of the stage intriguer with bushy eyebrows, sunken eyes, dark complexions, and thick lips; while the Hanoverians all look as stupid as they actually were, with eyes and mouths full of a kind of candid obstinacy. Now is heredity so much stronger with royalty than with ordinary folk who seem not to resemble their fathers and brothers and sisters and uncles as closely as this? Is pure blue blood responsible, or is part of this astonishing similarity due to fashion of shaving or doing one's hair? How far did convention dictate the kingly characteristics to each Court painter? But such questions are not for Mr. Bigham. Undeviating, he pursues his relentless task, from the Conqueror to Victoria herself. Each king answers the roll; first comes the place and date of his birth, then his parentage, education, and date of accession, followed by his principal battles and matrimonial habits, his relations with his Parliament and people—these are given in due order and each king dismissed, ticked off with the manner of his death duly recorded and a nice little summary of his merits and achievements at the end. Thus after a description of Queen Elizabeth's career Mr. Bigham ends as follows: "Her name and her reign mark an epoch, for under her auspices, perhaps despite them, England rose to be the first nation in the world, and Englishmen first grew into patriots. Whether as 'Gloriana,' the 'Virgin Queen,' or 'Good Queen Bess,' all titles to which she had a doubtful claim, her name is still cherished in England as it is envied throughout the world." As to George IV.: "The leader of a raffish fashion, the founder of Brighton and Regent's Park, he was called 'The First Gentleman in Europe,' and he maintained a certain aplomb, geniality, and bravado during the Napoleonic Wars; but as an historical character or as a serious individual he possesses hardly any claims to sympathy, interest, or respect." Only too true, we fear. But we are reminded of a geography book from which our mothers learnt which summed up the French as "a gay people, fond of light wine and dancing."

KINGSLEY MARTIN.

## RUSKIN RELICS

*The Solitary Warrior.* New Letters by RUSKIN. Edited by J. H. WHITEHOUSE. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

THIS book is so astonishing an example of the ultra-pious in editing and the ultra-spacious in printing that it can best be described numerically. It contains 192 pages, of which eight are devoted to preliminaries, twelve to a chronological summary and index, sixteen to editorial preface, twenty-nine are blank, and eighteen (approximately blank) contain a sort of Ruskin calendar: for instance, the page for 1873 informs us: "He visited Brantwood, Oxford, and Eton during the year. He gave a number of lectures on birds." The remaining 109 pages contain about eighty unpublished letters of Ruskin, which total less than 15,000 words. Since each letter is honoured with a new page, many contain no more than this:—

"MY DEAREST SUSIE,—Can John and you dine with us to-morrow, Wednesday? If not, can you come next day? I have such a kind, nice letter from your mother (as if a letter from her could ever be anything else) and I want to see you both very much.—Ever affectionately yours,

"J. RUSKIN."

Now it is obvious that great men as well as small ones find it necessary to write many trivial notes. They are destined by their authors for the waste-paper basket, but the waste-paper basket, for well-known reasons, does not receive them. As private possessions the originals are both admired and valuable, but is there a case for making public reproductions of them? I cannot see that the letter quoted above has the slightest interest either to the literary student or to the general reader. Having said this, I hasten to add that this collection is by no means uniformly on such a trivial level.

Ruskin was one of the most strenuously public of Victoria's public men, and these letters, although they add a few comparatively humble figures to his circle of earnest married couples and flattered girl friends, add nothing new to our extensive knowledge of him. They do, however, shed some scattered light on his strange emotional history. The period is 1860-1880, and Mr. Whitehouse's title is apt to this time. It begins five years after the annulment of Ruskin's marriage; it embraces the secret, dragging trouble of Rose la Touche, and the deaths of his parents; and when it ends, the stubborn warfare of "Fors" is at its height. The prophet was faced by a world who liked his eloquence better than his message. Restless, dissatisfied, lonely, he hardens his theories into action. Many of these letters are to a family named Scott, whom he befriended and whose daughter Susie received many confidences. He writes to her when the Guild of St. George was germinating:—

"The chief mistake made by modern philanthropy is in giving cheap, imperfect education. It looks to all the existent multitude and says 'What can I do for all these? Only so much for each, let me not attempt more.' Now imagine a gardener saying that of all the weeds in the world! One of my principal purposes is at once to break short this folly —"

And so on. But "these great plans of mine" were not born of hope.

"They would have been undertaken happily and hopefully, had things gone right for me. They are undertaken now hopelessly and because I must: the sight of the distress and horror round me in the world being too great for me. . . . All beauty is now dreadful to me."

So it goes on, with occasional happy gleams of wit, till the last letter to a sick friend: "It is time we should both stop being ill and make our minds up for perpetual welfare." But Ruskin was fighting two battles. The fight for "perpetual welfare" was to go on for another ten years, and then the conflict within, which haunts these letters, broke it and him.

BARRINGTON GATES.

## THE MEMOIRS OF GENERAL WRANGEL

*The Memoirs of General Wrangel.* Translated by SOPHIE GOULSTON. (Williams & Norgate. 21s.)

THESE memoirs should appeal to lovers of lost causes, partly because General Baron Wrangel so well looks and acts the part of a romantic soldier of fortune, and partly because they form, so the publishers tell us, "the only first-hand account yet published of the White Counter-Revolution in Russia... an epic of glorious failure, written in simple but vigorous style by a man who was pre-eminently a soldier." Alas, these Russian epics! So much in Russia is of "epic" dimensions—the population, the *hors d'œuvres*, the famines, the enthusiastic or disgruntled conversations. The perpetual meetings, the interminable harangues, the incessant chatter have made the detailed histories of the Russian Revolution almost unreadable; and although General Wrangel may be "simple but vigorous," he comes near at times to overloading his tale of counter-revolution with military small-talk. "Pre-eminently a soldier," he is apt to be as personal and as dull in his likes and dislikes as any Anglo-Indian major; how many readers, for example, are the wiser for being told at random that "Pluchtschewsky-Pluchtschik (the quartermaster-general) and I were not on very good terms when we parted"? But it must be admitted that this detailed and matter-of-fact book has value as an historical document, and anyone who wants to know what was going on in Southern Russia between 1918 and 1920 will have to consult it. General Wrangel took part successively in the campaign in Northern Caucasasia and the Denikin débâcle, and was mainly responsible for the temporary establishment of White authority in the Crimea and the final evacuation of that peninsula before the onslaught of a Red Army numbering more than half a million. Of more particular interest, on the whole, to the specialist in modern history are the numerous sidelights on the policies of England and France. General Wrangel naturally hoped that with a powerful backing from the Western Powers there need be no limit to what he might accomplish, and no doubt he honestly believed that he himself might be the man ordained to protect Western civilization from Bolshevism, of which, to give him credit, he seems early to have realized the ambitions and potentially far-reaching influence. As for the French, they eventually admitted that such help as they had lent to the White Armies had no other aim beyond the saving of Poland:—

"It must be noted that the English alone afforded material assistance to the White Armies. But this help was slow in arriving and inadequate. Support in the shape of armed forces, to a very small amount, to tell the truth, was given by the English, and in part by France. Unfortunately there was never any certainty that this help would not be abruptly withdrawn, and often this happened without any previous warning. The result was the loss of thousands of lives and immense stores left to plunderers. In the north-west the English, while they supported General Youdenitch and promised him their help, were combining at the same time in the rear with his political enemies, thus giving them the chance at the decisive moment to stab General Youdenitch in the back."

Apparently there were other ways in which we helped the "glorious failure" to muddle through to its inglorious end. Some aeroplanes, which General Wrangel had obtained from Bulgaria with the greatest difficulty, the English destroyed "by mistake"! As a result of which, a "sympathetic" colonel of the English Military Mission "blushed furiously." We have often heard lately that war is wicked: we should like to see more emphasis laid on the fact that it is ridiculous.

Perhaps it is just as well that General Wrangel failed, for at Sebastopol in 1920, though his troops were hungry and their toes protruded from their boots, he found time to have them sprinkled with holy water. More than holy water was needed to save Holy Russia in 1920, as in 1917 or 1929. It is a good thing to respect the merits of men like Wrangel, whose simple, soldierly qualities would be likely, if sublimated, to prove of great service in a demilitarized world; and it is a good thing that he has compiled this record of his remarkable activities; but his cause is now an anachronism, and his memoirs are likely to make few converts to the "epic" pastime of flogging a dead horse.

## NORSEMEN IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

*Thorstein of the Mere. A Saga of the Northmen in Lakeland.* By W. G. COLLINGWOOD. With an Introduction by EDWARD THOMPSON. (Heinemann. 6s.)

THE attachment of writers to a special district may be of two kinds. There is that present-day immediate attraction which leads a novelist to set his story amongst the moors and heaths and country folk he knows and loves. Hardy is the obvious example. The old Saxon name of Wessex loses its own stamp of period to become a background to contemporary dwellers. It may stand for continuity, never for antiquity. But there are other writers who approach their chosen district with so strongly developed a historic sense that they can only gain full satisfaction by plunging back into its past. Mr. Collingwood is of this latter type. Intimate geographically and scenically with the Lake District, he is also a keen antiquarian for whom Saxon and Norse characters and customs have their definite significance. The blending of the two enthusiasms, together with imagination, produced "Thorstein of the Mere." The author himself states in a preface: "The outline was sketched from hints in place-names and from scraps of real history; the shading is frankly romantic." Its historic framework is the tenth century, when Saxon kings were struggling for power and dominance over the Vikings settled in the north. There is no need to search out the precise meeting-line of fact and fiction, but from those "hints" one picks out Conistone Lake as fathering the hero. Thorstein's Mere is Thurston Water, with its little island like "a ship at anchor, while all the mere moves upbank or downbank as the wind may be." The steep-sided island is ideally fitted to be Thorstein's place of refuge and defence. His adventures, therefore, must lead up, by way of outlawry, to this. There is the further place-name lure of Dunmail Raise, where King Domhnall, beaten by the Saxons, climbed and passed away in cloud. So the story works itself in, between the two guiding posts of scene and history; and for verisimilitude there is all the author's knowledge of Norse habitations, trysts, and war councils.

But ingenuity and reconstruction alone would not have made the saga what it is. "Thorstein" was first published thirty-five years ago, for circulation only in the Lake District. It took its place as a book of local interest, whereby Lakeland visitors and inhabitants might, like the small boy for whom it was written, picture the country as it may have been a thousand years ago. The test for a more general appeal is whether or not its interest depends on antiquarian or Lakeland sympathies in the reader. The answer is apparent in the first two chapters: it does not. No dry-boned, literal-minded antiquarian ever produced a style and atmosphere like Mr. Collingwood's. If one has laid stress on the two factors of antiquity and scenery it is only to establish the origin of a work in which they are not only blended but surmounted. And to surmount the reconstruction of a period is not easy. At the beginning, certainly, the reader is conscious of the author's efforts to familiarize him with the Northmen's architecture, politics, and tactics. But even here it is not the author's clumsiness but the subject's strangeness that is responsible; and this flavour of cold strangeness becomes something of intense significance, as expressing, not a period remote in time, but a people remote from the land they came to live in.

"The Northern lands were their homes. On salt shores, where farming alone could never thrive; on bleak headlands among the seamews' nests; on lone islands veiled in the mist or girdled with the surf... there they bred and multiplied, and sang through the winter, and strove through the summer."

This is the one statement of what, throughout the book, is an enfolding atmosphere, so completely rounded on itself like an island universe, that to analyze its constituents is to break into unity and disturb its poise. Of these constituents, if they must be analyzed, one is the direct, easy quietness of its language, that without tricks or archaisms suggests a simple country honesty and careless strength—and this in prose with an unvaunted rhythmical perfection and a wealth of imagery. Another factor is the hint of mythological enchantment behind facts that can be rationally explained. Such is the race of red-haired giant fell-folk—Christians, speaking a strange language—of whom



comes the girl Raineach, strong and passionate and loyal. Such, too, is Thorstein's mist-vision above Thirlmere of an army marching across pathless mountain crags, the day the Saxons were to overcome the Northmen.

Yet there is nothing hollow or unreal in the story; it has passion and beauty, characters which are simply drawn yet subtle, and a haunting quality that closer acquaintance with the book brings out. Behind the battles and adventure, Viking triumphs and defeats, the author hints at a linking up of periods in the burden that both starts and ends the saga, of "love abiding and labour continuing, heedless of glory and fearless of death." Is this a too obvious apology for the remoteness of his theme, a last-minute effort to clutch universality between finger and thumb? With a less skilful writer it might well have been, since when the apology is most needed it is least acceptable. Mr. Collingwood's saga needs none; it has life and virility enough to convert what might have been a phrase of rhetoric into a simple unforced flowering. Its thousand years have not fossilized nor its thirty-five years wrinkled it; and all lovers of literary art and atmosphere will be glad that the hero of Thurston Water has at last come out of the Lakes.

### A WOMAN'S WAR BOOK

**The Forbidden Zone.** By MARY BORDEN. (Heinemann, 6s.)

THE present boom in war novels and plays is probably responsible for the appearance of this book, into which Mrs. Borden has gathered a number of sketches and prose poems written between 1914 and 1918, during four years of hospital work with the French Army in Flanders, the Somme country, and Champagne. She includes five stories of more recent date, but claims that these, like the ones actually written within sound of the guns in "La Zone Interdite," are based strictly upon facts: and, indeed, the fictional disguise is obviously very slight. This is essentially a volume of impressions, dedicated to the patient and ever courteous Poilus, who, even in extreme agony, maintained, we are assured, their perfect manners and their note of elegance. During her whole period of service only two Tommies passed through Mrs. Borden's hands. The one was mortally wounded, while the other was slightly injured. They both accepted her ministrations without complaint but without apparent gratitude. As the one was dying, the other urged him to "Stick it," while, on the following morning, the survivor, who made no reference to his dead comrade and ate a hearty breakfast, expressed himself, in answer to inquiries, as being "Al at Lloyd's, Madam." He spoke no further word. There are, as Mrs. Borden says, different kinds of courage, and her praise for the courteous French peasantry implies no deprecation of our stoical British phlegm. But the Poilus won their way very intimately into her heart, and as a tribute to the French soldiery her book fills a niche of its own in the literature of the War.

As an indictment of war itself, "The Forbidden Zone" will help to "swell the main account." It adds nothing fresh to our knowledge; but it is written vividly, sincerely, and movingly. Its pictures of the desolate landscape of the battlefields, and its descriptions of the bombing of a town from the air, of an operating theatre immediately behind the lines, and of a French territorial regiment of middle-aged and terribly weary men returning from the trenches to their base, are particularly graphic. Portraits of various types of soldiers are well sketched in, and there is a characteristically feminine touch in the story of the "dumb, subhuman giant" whom, after his attempted suicide, the surgeons were bent on nursing back to life in order that he might be tried by court-martial and shot. Mrs. Borden, conspiring with his night nurse, assisted the man to die in hospital! The sketches in which the author gives imaginative interpretation to her own wartime moods, and the prose poems in which she rails against Jehovah and fulminates against organized religion for condoning the War, are no less sincerely inspired, but are, somehow, less impressive than her simple, objective records. Sympathy suits Mrs. Borden better than indignation. On the whole, however, this is a vital and haunting book.

### TWO CRITICS

**A Miscellany.** By A. C. BRADLEY. (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.)

**Studies in Literature. Third Series.** By SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-ROUCH. (Cambridge University Press, 10s. 6d.)

ONE knows what to expect from Dr. Bradley. He always reads a book before writing about it: reads it attentively, disinterestedly, and from beginning to end. This is uncommon. His criticism, therefore, intelligent in itself, appears extremely intelligent; and if there are few flashes of insight, they are scarcely missed. His impartiality never ceases to astonish. He sees the other side of an argument so clearly, and allows for it so generously, that there is little satisfaction in disagreeing with him. Occasions for doing so are frequent in the present volume. One may, for instance, consider Tennyson an efficient, but decidedly second-rate poet: one may think his detailed method in nature poetry—selected here for special praise—his habit of counting the streaks of the tulip, in itself a blemish, and in its tendency a curse. But Dr. Bradley's moderation is enough to suggest a doubt. "I believe he will be considered the best poet of his own age, though not so much the best as his own age supposed; and while I have never thought that in native endowment he was quite the equal of the best of the preceding age, yet the distance, as it seems to me, is not wide; and as he was blessed with long life, made (like Pope) the most of his gift, and in a wonderful degree retained and even developed it to the end, I do not doubt that his place will be beside them." One may give a hearty assent to the substance, if not always to the phrasing of Arnold's views on Shelley, and feel some wonder that a normal, mature mind can prefer him: but Dr. Bradley's admiration, though very warm, is certainly not blind. One may dissent a little from his conclusions on the exact nature of Jane Austen's genius, and the relative merit of her works; but then observe how he expresses them: "Among the faithful there is a disposition to regard 'Pride and Prejudice' and 'Mansfield Park' as rivals for the first place, and to quarrel over them with some heat. . . . 'Pride and Prejudice,' I imagine is the most popular of all the novels, and many of its champions seem hardly to understand why 'Mansfield Park' should be so much admired. The friends of 'Mansfield Park' are a more select body, and they quite understand the admiration of 'Pride and Prejudice.'" The impartiality of the summing up strikes one as almost superhuman, from a critic who goes on to say that his own preference is on the popular side. Indeed, Dr. Bradley's criticism has the unique distinction of exciting the most respect when one differs from him. His reasons for preferring 'Pride and Prejudice' are all reasonable, though not (one hopes) unanswerable: and they arouse a desire to dispute the point at length. Admirers of Jane Austen, meanwhile, who hold the other view, may console themselves with a doubt of Dr. Bradley's being, in this case, quite of the inner circle. Perhaps he has not read Miss Austen quite often enough. Imperfect sympathy does now and then betray itself. He is too hard, for instance, on Emma as a person, and he occasionally speaks of Mr. Knightley without the prefix.

The volume is slighter than Dr. Bradley's earlier books, and one cannot help feeling that one or two of the essays are rather wasted labour. The study, for instance, on English poetry and German philosophy in the age of Wordsworth, has not much bearing either on poetry or philosophy; and in general it may be said that the author is at his best on concrete subjects. For this and other reasons—longer, closer study, natural predilection—the essay on "Coriolanus" is considerably the best thing in the book. One almost wonders if it is not too good—a little too appreciative; but this doubt may be suggested merely by the conviction we all, except Dr. Bradley, secretly cherish, that Shakespeare was a man of little sensibility and no insight, who had not the wit to put into his plays a tenth of what any intelligent schoolboy can now get out of them.

Sir Arthur, in this new volume, is very chatty and good-humoured, as he always is, and repeats many of his former observations with a great deal of geniality. We have been let into the secret of his literary admirations, perhaps, often enough: their number is not vast: he has not Mr. Saintsbury's inspired rapacity, his lightning eye for the one jewel

in a rubbish-heap ; still, it is impossible to take offence. Sir Arthur's criticism shows the man in the street at his best. He has not much to say, and that little is not very profound, and he has no advantage of manner in expressing it, though he attempts manner. But his views are fairly sensible, his attitude is invariably "nice," and his jocularly, though not irresistible, an evidence of good will. The book should be both entertaining and stimulating to the intelligent schoolboy already mentioned.

K. J.

### THE DILETTANTE AND THE IMMORTELLE

Horace Walpole and Madame du Deffand. By ANNA DE KOVEN. (Appleton. 10s. 6d.)

"I was thinking the other day that I was a garden and you the gardener, and that, seeing winter was coming, you had pulled up all the flowers which you thought were out of season, while there still bloomed various flowers which were not entirely faded—little violets and little daisies. And that you had only left a certain flower, without fragrance or colour, which we call an *immortelle*, because it never fades. This is an emblem of my soul, where there remains no thought or imagination, but a great constancy in esteem and attachment."

THUS wrote Madame du Deffand to Horace Walpole, two years after his last visit to her ; and in this passage she presents vividly and with characteristic vigour a true picture of the singular relationship which was maintained between these two diverse and strangely assorted friends from their first meeting till her death in 1780. Yet, nevertheless, if Madame du Deffand were a garden, she was no passive and inarticulate parterre ; she was, indeed, a garden with initiative enough to engage its own gardener, and, moreover, a garden that could vehemently protest when the insensitive and egotistical gardener proceeded to uproot blossoms that were still in full bloom. As to the reason why a soul of such clear vision and absolute integrity should have chosen the filigree connoisseur of Strawberry Hill to be the arbiter of her happiness, that must always remain an enigma to the student of human relationships ; for, though they undoubtedly had something in common, Horace Walpole, for all his gifts, was quite unworthy of such devotion as hers. He even seems to have been incapable of understanding the nature of her attachment, and too frequently assumed the airs of an embarrassed bachelor of fifty resisting the amorous advances of a woman old enough, as she herself reminded him, to have been his mother. He, with quite a considerable talent for making acquaintances, utterly failed to comprehend her genius for friendship. It would be, perhaps, an exaggeration to say that he could not conceive of a friendship on equal terms between a man and a woman ; but he does seem to have had a doubt whether, in becoming more than an acquaintance, a woman would not inevitably, in the eyes of the world at least, become a mistress : and Horace Walpole was peculiarly sensitive to the cynical smiles of the fashionable world. In the jargon of to-day, he was assuredly the victim of an inferiority complex. The frailness of his diminutive body had so obsessed his mind that he lived, as he, himself, owned, in perpetual dread of being considered ridiculous ; and it seemed to him that the unashamed devotion of a blind old Frenchwoman must render him a figure of fun in the derisive regard of an unsympathetic world ; whereas, in truth, his masculine self-consciousness has betrayed his essential absurdity to the eye of posterity. He was also, perhaps, a little afraid of being dominated by a mind which he must have realized was of finer calibre than his own ; and so, to soothe his self-distrust and preserve his conceit of himself, he felt that he must assert himself in some way ; and, as his intellectual gifts, though by no means to be despised, were not equal to subduing the mind of one who had corresponded with Voltaire on equal terms, he fell back on the device of lacerating her heart and chiding her, like a ruffled coxcomb, with fretful protestations against the terms of affection in which she, with her uncompromising sincerity and generosity of soul, had honoured him by addressing him. And yet, for all his occasional apparent callousness, Walpole, in his measure, did reciprocate Madame du

Deffand's devotion ; and he must have suffered considerably at times from the civil war in his own heart between his better and his meaner self.

Mrs. de Koven has told the story of this eighteenth-century friendship with sympathy and discretion.

### MR. SNOWDEN

Philip Snowden. By EPHESIAN. (Cassell. 7s. 6d.)

ALTHOUGH a Socialist, Mr. Snowden has many of the best qualities which have carried the most unrepentant individualists from poverty and obscurity to resounding material success. Fundamental brain power, determination, persistence, and courage have enabled him to overcome obstacles which would have daunted and defeated most men and to advance to a commanding position on the national and international stage. The claim of his biographer "Ephesian" to have produced an impartial portrait is substantially justified, although sympathy with the activities of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a faint suspicion of "hero worship" sometimes come "breaking in." The author displays a sound knowledge of modern British Socialism which makes the book of value to political students. The romance of Mr. Snowden's life is not only the romance of a man but of a movement. Here one may read of how the I.L.P. eventually triumphed over the Revolutionary Socialists, of the S.D.F., how it wooed and won over the Trade Unions, of its actions and reactions to Liberalism in Parliament in the years before the war. Once familiar but now almost forgotten figures flit through the pages of the book: Hyndman, the "Beau Brummell" of Socialism, Keir Hardie, the dour and fanatical leader without a trace of personal ambition, John Burns, the rather grandiose but granite-like democrat, the picturesque and tragic Victor Grayson who set the hearts of working girls fluttering in the Colne Valley.

Mr. Snowden, like Mr. Pim, "passes by" through the bleak, industrial towns of the north, and further southward among the political "heathen," preaching fervidly like some early missionary to small bands of the faithful. Even on his honeymoon, there was no pause in his oratorical activities.

"Ephesian" seeks to justify Mr. Snowden on the ground of consistency, but he is not altogether successful. If there is no change of views, there is a strongly marked change of emphasis in the utterances of the Mr. Snowden who hurled his thunderbolts into the Liberal camp at Cowling more than thirty years ago, and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. While this book cannot be compared with such masterly monographs as Froude's "Beaconsfield" or Lord Rosebery's "Randolph Churchill," it is to be welcomed as the first biography of one of the most remarkable and outstanding figures of the day.

### INDISPENSABLE ANNUALS

AMONG the amenities of civilization which we are apt to take for granted, but which it would be an intolerable nuisance to be without, are the annual reference books. All of us, and especially those who work in London offices, are deeply indebted to the compilers of these books for their astonishing industry, ingenuity, and accuracy.

The Post Office London Directory, 1930 (Kelly, 55s.), is in its 131st year. It runs to nearly 4,000 pages, and is a mass of well-arranged information. "A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage and Baronetage, the Privy Council, and Knighthage, by Sir Bernard Burke (Ulster King of Arms) and Ashworth P. Burke, commonly known as Burke's Peerage (£5 5s.), is in its eighty-eighth edition. It contains over 3,000 distinguished pages, and the names of all Mr. Twemlow's relatives. Kelly's Handbook to the Titled, Landed, and Official Classes, 1930 (30s.), contains in one alphabetical list biographical details and addresses of about 30,000 persons, and it differs from Burke's Peerage in noticing such low people as Members of the House of Commons. "Debrett's Peerage, Baronetage, Knighthage, and Com-



panionage" (Dean & Son, 75s.) has doubled in size in thirty years; it needs no bush. "Who's Who" (Black, 50s.) descends still lower, and includes all sorts of people whose only claim to distinction is that they have done notable work, and "Who Was Who, 1916-1928" (Black, 21s.), pays the same compliment to the recently dead. Only the journalist knows how many blunders have been avoided by the use of these books.

Among the many year-books which are indispensable to certain sections of the community, we may note "The Writers' and Artists' Year-Book, 1930" (Black, 3s. 6d.), and the "List of Members" published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants (2s.). Finally, although the 1930 edition has not yet reached us, we must mention "Whitaker's Almanack," which is in many ways the most wonderful and comprehensive of all the annuals.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**Small Rain.** By LESLEY STORM. (Cassell. 7s. 6d.)

Miss Storm's novel is simple enough in outline. In the first part, John and Hester fall in love; in the second, John marries and is divorced from Joyce; in the third, he returns to Hester. Within this neat shape, the matter is fairly well packed, and the novel is, on the whole, a competent and entertaining piece of work. But Miss Storm is a very unequal writer. At her best, she has force and originality; at her worst, she is merely trite. In the John-Hester love affair, ecstasy all but breaks through. The scene in which Hester comes to London to find out why John left her so suddenly in Cornwall is admirable for the truth, poignancy, and balance of the emotions. There are several good little touches; for instance, the description of the sea-gulls, which "circle and swoop, screaming when they get what they want and screaming when they don't. A beggarly rôle for birds whose wings are strong." (The italics are ours.) And the question between John and Mrs. Monk as to which is the more malignant, chronic discontent or chronic hope? Compared with the first part, the rest of the book seems rather mechanical, although the second part, John's unsuccessful marriage with Joyce, a beautiful, vain, conventional, unintelligent creature, is vigorous and interesting.

**My System.** By A. NIMZOWITSCH. (Bell. 12s. 6d.)

Those who care for the theory and practice of chess will enjoy this book. Nimzowitsch's career as a master has been distinguished. He has played in thirteen Master tournaments since the War, and won six, the last time this year at Carlsbad, when Capablanca was competing. He claims, with a certain justification, to be the founder of the modern "neo-romantic" school of players. His exposition of his principles is extremely interesting, and his comments on games in which are illustrated such manœuvres as a sacrifice in order to establish a "blockade" are very illuminating.

**Information on the World Court, 1918-1928.** By J. W. WHEELER-BENNETT and MAURICE FANSHAW. (Allen & Unwin. 10s.)

This book originates in a book issued in 1924 by the Information Service on International Affairs on the Permanent Court of International Justice, and in supplements issued annually giving information about the work of the Court. The present volume is a useful compilation. It describes the constitution and history of the Court, and summarizes its judgments and advisory opinions.

**The Bank of England Forgery.** By GEORGE DILNOT. (Bles 10s. 6d.)

**The Trial of Herbert John Bennett.** With an Introduction by EDGAR WALLACE. (Bles. 10s. 6d.)

These are two volumes in the Famous Trials Series. The Bank of England case is a particularly interesting one and is very well edited by Mr. Dilnot. It is one of the most famous of all forgery cases, for the two Bidwells, Macdonnell, and Noyes managed to obtain no less than £100,000 from the bank on forged bills of exchange. Their procedure was extremely simple, but very clever. The whole trial is well worth reading. The Bennett trial is often called the Yarmouth Beach Murder, where Bennett murdered his wife. It is not really a very interesting case; indeed, the most peculiar thing about it is that apparently Marshall Hall, who defended Bennett, "never relinquished his opinion that Bennett was innocent."

## AUCTION BRIDGE

By CALIBAN.

### TRINCULO KEEPS A RECORD (II)

"DID you get anything else, Trinculo," asked Stephano (a trifle ironically), "out of the analysis of your precious sixty hands?"

"Why, lots more," answered Trinculo. "What would you like to know about?"

"Suit distribution always interests me," said Prospero. "Have you analyzed the suit distributions of your various hands?"

"Of course." Trinculo scribbled hard for a few moments, and then handed us the following:—

SUIT PATTERNS OF SIXTY CONSECUTIVE HANDS

Distribution.	No. of Hands held.	No. of Hands which secured the Declaration	No. of Successful Declarations.
4432	14	2	1
5332	14	3	2
5431	9	4	4
4333	7	2	2
5422	6	1	1
6322	2	—	—
6421	2	2	1
7321	2	—	—
4441	1	—	—
5521	1	1	1
6331	1	—	—
7420	1	1	1
Total	60	16	13

"Very pretty," said Stephano, after examining the chart. "But what's the use of it?"

"It's of very little use—as an aid to the budding bridge-player. But it has certain points of interest all the same.

"Such as, in the first place, the astonishingly close correspondence of the sample to the theoretical norm. I have, as you fellows are aware, an unshakable faith in the law of averages; but I should not have expected so minute a sample to vindicate that 'law' so effectively."

"But how," said someone, "has it done so?"

"Why, look at this." And Trinculo showed us this:—

SUIT PATTERNS OF SIXTY CONSECUTIVE HANDS

Suit Distribution.	Number of Hands.	
	to be expected a priori.	Actually held.
4432	13	14
5332	9	14
5431	8	9
4333	6	7
5422	6	6
6322	3	2
6421	3	2
Others	12	6
Total	60	60

"The results of the sixty deals give, as you will agree, a surprisingly accurate idea of the relative frequency of various distributions."

"Anything else of interest?"

"Yes, the comparative paucity of hands containing six or more cards of one suit. I should have expected—looking at the thing mathematically—to hold about twelve of these in sixty. Instead, I only held eight. The explanation, of course, may merely be that my sample is much too small. But the same result has presented itself before. I have a theory which explains it, though I won't go into it now."

"Well, all this seems rot to me," said Stephano, who is on the Stock Exchange, and who despises Trinculo's theorizing. "It would have been more interesting to be told whether suit calls turned out better as a rule than No-Trumps." Stephano is a firm believer in the "take-out" of a No-Trumper into a suit; and protracted and vigorous argument sometimes ensues.

"No sooner asked for than supplied. But this," added Trinculo, "must be my last exhibit for to-day—and I shan't, I fear, have time to discuss it properly."

Call.	Successful.	Unsuccessful.	Total.
One No Trump	5	1	6
Two No Trumps	14	3	17
Three No Trumps	1	—	1
Total : No Trumps	20	4	24
One Spade ..	1	—	1
Two Spades ..	3	4	7
Three Spades ..	5	2	7
Four or more Spades ..	1	—	1
One Heart ..	—	—	—
Two Hearts ..	2	—	2
Three Hearts ..	4	1	5
Four or more Hearts ..	1	4	5
Total : Major Suits	17	11	28
Clubs or Diamonds			
One .. ..	1	—	1
Two .. ..	1	—	1
Three .. ..	4	1	5
Four or more ..	1	—	1
Total : Minor Suits	7	1	8
Total .. ..	44	16	60

"Two very striking points emerge from this analysis—the number of hands played in No-Trump and the comparative failure (on which I have commented before) of game-going calls in Hearts and Spades. The tendency is always for players holding the major suits strongly to push themselves 'over the edge.'"



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INSURANCE NOTES

AN INSURANCE SOCIETY'S CENTENARY

WITH the end of 1929 the National Mutual Life Office completes its hundredth year of existence, and to mark the event the Society is: (1) Declaring a large special centennial bonus, in addition to the ordinary bonus; (2) publishing its history in book form.

The National Mutual is, of course, a life assurance office of the very highest standing, and it is especially distinguished for the strong attitude which it has adopted against "rebating" and "own case agents"—two haphazard features of insurance business which are admittedly the bane of insurer and agent alike.

The "History of the National Mutual Life Assurance Society" may be obtained by all friends, actual and potential, of the Society, and it will afford some most interesting reading. The "record" books of the "National" and the "Mutual," written for the most part in a fine, clerkly hand, whose equal is rarely seen nowadays, contain many references to contemporary affairs, and are, in a measure, historical documents, which view important contemporary events as affecting propitiously or adversely the business of life assurance.

ANNUITIES

Improved annuity rates have recently been issued by the Standard Life Assurance Company. For elderly people whose capital is limited the annuity is a particularly suitable form of investment, and the point to be emphasized is that if an annuity is bought by or for a person at, say, sixty-five years of age, the yields that are given may mean the difference between exceedingly hard circumstances and comparative comfort.

The Standard Life Assurance Company is, perhaps, the premier office for this class of business, and for some years past the Standard's annuity rates have compared favourably with those offered by any other company.

The new rates are even more favourable, chiefly between the ages of fifty and eighty, the important ages so far as this class of business is concerned.

In 1928 the Standard Life received no less than £494,574 as purchase money for annuities granted, or nearly £200,000 more than the amount received from the same source in 1924.

Examples, from the old and new tables, of the amount of annuity, payable half-yearly, granted for every £100 invested are quoted below:—

NEW TABLE			
Age last birthday.	Males.		Females.
	£	s. d.	£ s. d.
60	9	7 8	8 4 8
65	10	18 5	9 8 10
70	13	1 10	11 4 7
75	16	6 6	13 18 5
OLD TABLE			
Age last birthday.	Males.		Females.
	£	s. d.	£ s. d.
60	9	6 10	8 3 10
65	10	17 2	9 7 7
70	13	0 2	11 2 11
75	16	4 5	13 16 4

If desired the Company will supply special quotations for annuities with a proportionate payment to date of death.

THE USES OF A LIFE POLICY

Many people are not properly aware of the various ways in which a life assurance policy can be employed, for it must be appreciated that after a few years' premiums have been paid, the policy acquires a cash value which is an asset of the person assured. He can, for instance, raise cash either by surrender of the policy to the insurance company, or by its transfer to a third party, who will continue to pay the premiums, and in due course draw the benefit. The policy can also be deposited as security for a loan. Generally speaking, life companies are willing to lend money on the security of their own policies within the surrender values. They charge a reasonable rate of interest, and they enjoy complete security because if the premiums are not maintained, the surrender value gives them the whole of the advance. On the other hand, if the premiums are continued, the entire loan is paid off when the policy eventually becomes a claim.



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**B U M P U S**

## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS—ARGENTINE RAILS—TIN MERGER—P. AND O.

EVERYONE has lost money or seen his capital shrink on the Stock Exchange last year. Nor is the dismal process of counting losses yet completed. When the Hatry settlement takes place a few hundred members of the Stock Exchange know that they will have to shoulder losses of over £1,000,000. When the examinations of Royal Mail and Inveresk Paper affairs are published, shareholders may find that even the present market prices of their holdings are still inflated. But the stock market losses of 1929 are better regarded as so much experience gained. Is it too much to hope that the flotation of gim-crack companies will never again be facilitated as it was in 1928 by the joint-stock banks, brokers, and directors lending their names indiscriminately to company prospectuses, by the Stock Exchange Committee granting "leave to deal" without exacting rigid tests of financial probity, and by the daily Press, particularly the financial Press, giving puffs and "writing up" financial news without attempting to make the inquiries which an ordinary news editor would regard as essential? Is it too much to hope that shareholders will be more on their guard against financial bad management and will agitate for the removal of incompetent or guinea-pig directors? To help provide the opportunity for more intelligent investment shall, at any rate, be our New Year's resolution.

The suspension of gold payments by Argentina should not unduly alarm holders of Argentine Government loans. It is not expected to be more than a temporary measure. Rather should holders of Argentine Railway stocks consider how they are likely to be affected by the extremely poor crops (wheat, maize, and linseed) which have been reported this season. Railway receipts in the first half of 1930 are almost bound to compare unfavourably with those of 1929. Traffics are, however, more diversified than is commonly imagined:—

Proportion of 1928-29 gross receipts from	Southern	Central	Pacific	Western
Passengers and parcels	31.4	28.0	22.0	29.6
Live stock	8.2	2.7	5.2	17.8
Wheat	12.0	12.5	9.5	13.4
Maize	1.0	13.4	6.9	5.6
Linseed	0.8	3.6	1.2	1.3

A 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. reduction in wheat and maize traffics would not in itself seriously upset the income of the Argentine railways, but the reactions upon Argentine prosperity of bad harvests would, of course, affect other branches of the railway traffics. The opinion, for what it is worth, of the Stock Exchange jobbers is that the four leading railways will maintain their dividends. In that event high dividend yields would be obtainable at the present market prices:—

	Price	Dividend %	Yield %
B.A. Great Southern	96½	8	8.29
Central Argentine	85	7	8.23
B.A. Pacific	85	7	8.23
B.A. Western	80	7	8.75

It cannot be said that the Anglo-Oriental group allow grass to grow under their feet. The London Malayan Tin Trust was formed in July, 1928, to consolidate the interests of the group in the Malayan tin-dredging industry, and made a public issue of shares in October, 1928. The Tin Selection Trust made a new issue of 500,000 £1 shares at 25s. to shareholders in February, 1929. Both these trust companies are now to be absorbed by London Tin Syndi-

cate, and in the process their joint capital of £2,750,000 is, in effect, being written down by £1,625,000. (This ingenious result was obtained by offering seven London Tin shares for every sixteen Tin Selection Trust and three for every eight London Malayan Tin, which at the then market price of £2 for London Tin seemed a fair enough exchange.) After the merger it is proposed to split the £1 shares of London Tin into one non-cumulative preference share of 10s. and one ordinary share of 10s., and to distribute to shareholders of the three companies an amount of preference shares of London Tin equal to the available undivided profits of the respective companies.

Chartered accountants testify to the fairness of this complicated tin-merger scheme, and we are left only to deplore the extravagance of incurring approximately £80,000 in "preliminary expenses" on the formation of London Malayan Tin Trust less than eighteen months ago, and of demanding £125,000 in share premiums from shareholders of Tin Selection Trust less than twelve months ago. With tin at £178 a ton, it is obviously a prudent proceeding to write down the capital of trusts which invested in tin-mining companies when the metal was selling at over £200 per ton, especially as London Malayan Tin Trust earned less than 2 per cent. on its capital in its first year, while Tin Selection Trust must have made heavy losses if it speculated in the tin share market. The Anglo-Oriental group is certainly wise in dealing promptly with an unpleasant situation. If the tin restriction scheme, to which we referred on December 21st, does not come into being, worse may happen.

On December 21st we ventured to remark that Lord Inchcape's sea-going statistics were not as a rule as good as his sea-going stories, for it appeared that the number of sea-miles traversed by his group's vessels had gone up in the course of his speech at the P. and O. meeting from 14,000,000 to 17,000,000. It has been pointed out to us that the 17,000,000 sea-miles referred to the "P. and O., its allied and associated companies," while the 14,000,000 referred only to "the combine's vessels." Our mistake seems excusable, but is none the less regretted. Does it not call attention to a serious defect of British company accounting—the lack of consolidated income accounts and balance-sheets for all "combine" companies? Shipping combines in this matter are among the worst offenders. The position of the Royal Mail group is at the moment being investigated by a firm of chartered accountants. Why? Because the Royal Mail has never published a consolidated balance-sheet into which all the liabilities and assets of its subsidiary and associated companies are brought—with appropriate deductions in respect of minority or outside interests. If it had it would have been obvious long ago that the Royal Mail group was over-capitalized, having regard to the earning capacity of its fleet. Unfortunately, the new Companies Act does not provide for consolidated accounts, albeit this is an age of industrial combinations. The P. and O., being a chartered company, is immune even from the provisions of the Companies Act, but we appeal to Lord Inchcape to set a good example to his fellow shipping magnates by publishing a consolidated income account and balance-sheet for the P. and O. combine.



